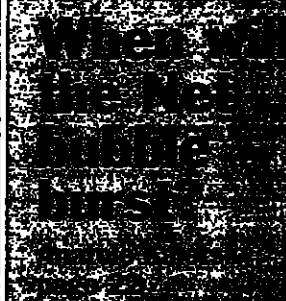




Why Menzies is wrong about Jacqueline du Pré
Sandra Parsons, page 21

How good is the film? pages 3-5



Dangers of the stand-up sun-bed
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EVERY WEEKDAY

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS: Today's token, page 26

'Too many leaders are carried out or kicked out...it is rare to leave on an upswing'

Resignation surprise by Ashdown

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

PADDY ASHDOWN stunned Westminster last night by announcing that he will stand down as Liberal Democrat leader this summer after 11 years at the helm.

The move surprised and saddened his 45 MPs, who were informed at a private meeting at the Commons. It also sparked debate on a leadership battle, with Charles Kennedy, Simon Hughes and Nick Harvey emerging as front-runners last night.

The decision, of which the Prime Minister was informed well in advance, threw a question mark over cooperation between the parties of the Centre Left. Mr Ashdown and Mr Blair have been the driving forces behind the 'alignment' of the Centre Left, but Mr Ashdown has faced internal criticism for appearing too close to Mr Blair.

There was also speculation last night that Mr Ashdown be re-elected now because of privately given up hope of winning on proportion before the election.

Mr Ashdown's resignation was not to begin with, but after the Welsh election and the European elections in June.

Mr Ashdown will remain in charge. Although the candidates may be cautious about Labour links, Mr Blair was reported to be relaxed about doing business

with Mr Ashdown's successor. Mr Kennedy, 39, a former party president who is sceptical of close links with Labour, appeared to be an early favourite in the leadership race.

Mr Ashdown insisted at a Westminster news conference that his decision had been taken with his wife Jane before the last election. They had then agreed that Mr Ashdown, who will be 58 next month, would not fight another election as leader or as MP for Yeovil.

At their first meeting after the election, Mr Ashdown informed Mr Blair that he would quit as party leader in the middle of the Parliament. Mr Blair was recently told that the formal announcement would be made yesterday.

Ironically, it meant that the Government's announcement on Lords reform, long promoted by Mr Ashdown, was overshadowed. It is understood that the Government even considered delaying the Lords reform announcement for a day to accommodate Mr Ashdown.

It was clear last night that Mr Ashdown had been under strong pressure from his family to stand down. Mrs Ashdown sat at the back of the news conference in her husband's office and said that she was extremely pleased with his decision. She said: "We never see him. Weekends belong to the party as well as the week. Need I say more."

Mr Ashdown said the decision had been a "very personal" one, which ordinary people would see as "essentially human".

He has been leader for 11 years, making him the longest-serving mainstream party leader, and currently the oldest.

Mr Ashdown said he decided to announce his decision now to avoid speculation about his leadership and bitter in-fighting during the record round of elections in May and June.

He was clearly relieved to be going on his own terms. "Too many leaders are carried out or kicked out. It is relatively rare for a leader to choose his time of going and to leave on an upswing."

Party President Baroness Maddock said in a letter to MPs: "It would be wholly improper for anyone to declare their candidacy formally or informally, or to campaign for the leadership until these elections are over."

However, within an hour of Mr Ashdown's announcement, a friend of party campaigns chief Mr Harvey, a rare Eurosceptic in the Liberal leadership, confirmed that he would stand as a candidate when the time came.

A senior leadership source declined to condemn the Harvey camp, saying: "That's fine, but it would be very surprising if people started setting out their stall before the election."

Other possible contenders

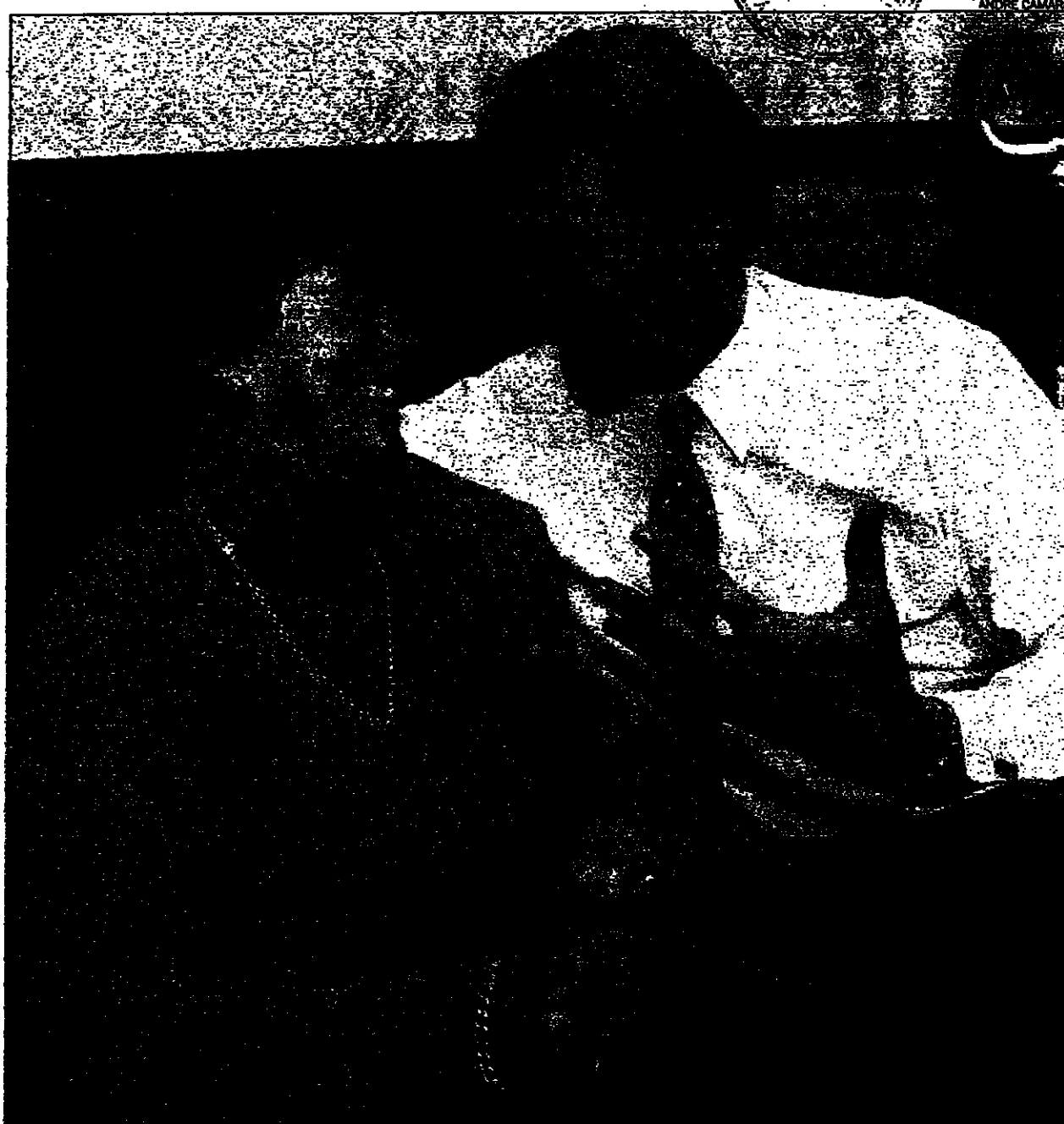
include Menzies Campbell, Matthew Taylor, Malcolm Bruce, Don Foster and Alan Beith, although some will be considered too old.

Mr Ashdown said he had a "succession strategy" like "any sensible manager" of putting people in frontline positions over the past two years to ensure the party had a proper range of candidates. "But I don't believe in a democratic party that leaders should choose their successors. That's a matter wholly for the party."

Mr Blair said in a statement that Mr Ashdown was "one of the outstanding party leaders of his generation". A spokesman for the Prime Minister said: "Of course the links between the Government and Liberal Democrats will continue to develop both in Mr Ashdown's remaining time as leader and thereafter."

The links were "not dependent upon personalities" but on the desire for "a more mature and modern politics".

William Hague wished Mr Ashdown well for the future: "We have often disagreed but we have always enjoyed good personal relations."



Paddy Ashdown and his wife, Jane, at the Commons yesterday after he had resigned as leader of the Liberal Democrats

Interview and career profile, pages 4-5

Racist massacre, page 15

Nato expands Kosovo military force

AN AMERICAN aircraft carrier, accompanied by two guided missile cruisers armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, were ordered to the Adriatic last night after Nato decided to increase strikepower in the region.

Britain also announced that four more Harrier GR7s were being sent from RAF Laarbruch in Germany to Gioia del Colle in Italy early next week to join the four already in position. An extra tanker will also be dispatched to Italy.

The military buildup came as Washington announced that Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, would fly to Paris and London next week for meetings with her French and British counterparts on the Kosovo crisis.

The US Navy's USS Enterprise, equipped with more than 70 aircraft, was ordered to leave the Mediterranean for the Adriatic when it became clear that President Milosevic, the Yugoslav leader, would not halt the repressive action in Kosovo. In simultaneous moves aimed at increasing pressure on Mr Milosevic, all Nato aircraft based in Italy were switched from four days' operational notice to two days.

Yesterday's decision by Nato's North Atlantic Council in Brussels to increase the military firepower followed a briefing by the two generals who met Mr Milosevic in Belgrade on Tuesday. They reported that the Yugoslav leader had shown no flexibility over Kosovo and had been "blunt and obdurate" in his refusal to agree to Nato's demands. The council is expected to remain in almost continual session throughout the rest of the week. Yesterday's military moves were described as "precautionary measures".

The Queen in protest over letters

LAWYERS acting for the Queen, Princess Margaret and the Prince of Wales have written to Piers Morgan, editor of *The Mirror*, over the publication of private letters written to an unnamed member of the Royal Family.

The family advisers have been given to the paper by a relative "to set the record straight".

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Peers feel sweep of new broom

By James Landale and Philip Webster

RADICAL plans for a partial, part-nominated second House of Parliament were backed by the Government yesterday as it began moves to sweep away the centuries-old rights of hereditary peers.

As the Government published its Bill to expel 750 hereditary peers from the Lords, it announced that a Royal Commission will report before the end of the year on proposals for a second chamber. But the new House must "neither threaten nor usurp" the supremacy of the Commons.

In a 50-page White Paper, the Government gave the Commission a broad remit to consider a wide range of possible reforms, but it gave a clear hint that it preferred a part-elected, part-nominated chamber. The Commission should also consider how a reformed upper house could accommodate members of the devolved assemblies, and the Govern-

ment suggested a role for MEPs.

The Commission will be headed by the former Conservative Cabinet minister Lord Wakeham. Gerald Kaufman, Labour MP for Manchester Gorton, was the only other member of the 12-strong body appointed yesterday.

Recommendations by the Commission will be considered by a joint committee of both Houses. Any resulting legislation would be introduced by November 2000 at the earliest.

Ministers made plain that they were ready to accept the deal negotiated before Christmas by Viscount Cranborne, the sacked former Tory Lords leader, that will allow 91 hereditary peers to survive in the "transition House" that will come into being later this year. But they warned that this would depend on Conservative peers not obstructing its programme. In the Commons, Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the House, said that a

"pitched battle" in the Lords would jeopardise the deal.

Under the plans, some 50 Labour peers will be appointed later this year to bring the Government side up to parity with the Tories in the Lords once the bulk of the hereditary peers have gone. Apart from those salvaged by the Cranborne deal, peers who are in



"At least we were around for more than 800 years"

the Lords only by virtue of their birth will be out by the end of this year's Parliamentary session in October. The House of Lords Bill will give the expelled peers the right to vote in and stand for Parliamentary elections.

After negotiations between Buckingham Palace and Downing Street, the Prince of Wales and four other Royal Dukes will lose their rights to sit and vote in the Lords. The existing 26 Church of England bishops and 12 law lords will continue to sit during the transition period.

The deadline for the Royal Commission is tight and throughout the day ministers expressed hope that they could implement its proposals by the next election.

Mr Blair said in a foreword to the White Paper: "For too long, hereditary peers with no democratic legitimacy... have been able to play a part in laws affecting everyone in Britain."

The Lords heard the announcement first from Lady Jay of Paddington, the Labour Leader in the Lords, who said: "A fundamental anachronism can be removed as we reach the millennium." Her statement met with cheers from Labour peers.

But Lord Strathclyde, the Tory Leader in the Lords, said there was "a deep sense of disquiet" about what she had announced. He said: "Nothing said today justifies the removal of the hereditary peers before the Royal Commission reports. It is sheer constitutional vandalism to tear down a structure that is working well and offer no ideas on what they will build in its place."

In the Commons, Mrs Beckett told MPs that Mr Blair will give up his veto on nominations from the two other party leaders. But the Prime Minister will retain the most important power to decide how many new peers each party gets.

Lords reform, pages 10-12

Missing girls 'talked of running away'

By Helen Johnstone, Michael Horsnell and Stephen Farrell



Lisa: had no worries

A POLICE hunt with sniffer dogs intensified last night for two ten-year-old girls who went missing after setting out for school on Tuesday morning.

One of their schoolmates has told police they talked of running away but concern has grown for Charlene Lunn and Lisa Hoodless after the school in St Leonards, East Sussex, sent a letter to parents over the Christmas holidays warning of a suspicious man seen loitering near the school.

The girls were last seen at 8.30am when they left the Lunn family home to walk to Christ Church C of E Primary School 500 yards away.

The girls never reached the school but the alarm was only raised by Lisa's mother Julie when she went to pick her daughter up from school and discovered that she had never arrived. Police were told at 5pm. Police last night said they were "hopeful" of finding the girls safely after a number

of unconfirmed sightings in the St Leonards area.

Charlene's father Keith, 48, her stepmother Philomena, 46, and Lisa's parents Andy, 37, and Julie, 35, appealed for them to return home. Mr Lunn, a drug and alcohol adviser for Hastings Council, said: "Please come home. You will not be told off." Mr Hoodless, a council gardener, said the neither girl had showed any worries: "Lisa's a very happy girl, very bright and very intelligent."



Charlene: father's appeal

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Family divided by du Pré film row

Cellist's niece accuses parents of gross distortion, reports Darya Alberge

THE row over the new film about Jacqueline du Pré worsened yesterday as her niece attacked her own parents for portraying the cellist as a sexual predator.

Clare Finzi, 33, daughter of Hilary and Kiffer, whose story was told in *A Genius in the Family*, on which the film *Hilary and Jackie* is based, accused her parents of grossly distorting the true story to make more money. The film, in which du Pré is portrayed by the actress Emily Watson, focuses on the cellist's affair with Kiffer, the husband of her sister, Hilary.

Miss Finzi said that her father was a womaniser. "Jackie comes over as the sole protagonist and Dad is portrayed as a gentle soul. In fact, this is absolutely untrue. My father had several affairs, tending to choose women who were lost and unsure of themselves. He was to then a wise, philosophical figure. As he had no boundaries, it would end up with a sexual affair."

One of du Pré's closest friends, Cynthia Friend, who was with the cellist when she died of multiple sclerosis in 1987, said that they had told each other every secret, but that du Pré had never said anything about an affair with Kiffer.

"My gut feeling is that, as a very close friend, the fact she never mentioned it meant it was something she couldn't discuss," she said.

Miss Finzi and Ms Friend were speaking in advance of the opening of *Hilary and Jackie* this week in London. The film portrays du Pré as a spoilt and foul-mouthed sexu-

TWO SISTERS. TWO LIVES. ONE LOVE... HILARY and JACKIE A TRUE STORY

Du Pré supporters dispute the film's assertion of truth

al predator. It is based on an account by du Pré's siblings, Hilary and Kiffer.

Miss Finzi, who teaches the cello privately and in school, had been reticent about criticising her parents, but said yesterday that she could no longer remain silent.

"This has been such a gross misrepresentation, I can't let it go unchallenged," she said.

"I don't feel bitter. That doesn't mean I think what he did was good. I'm angry he's sitting back, letting this representation go ahead. I feel so frustrated that it's obviously untrue."

"I cannot believe the producer and director were taken in by a story which had such apparent gaps and takes such a shallow view."

Miss Finzi has written a letter to her father, to which she has so far not received a reply. However, what hurt most of all, she said, was that du Pré's

genius has been so overshadowed by the sexual angle. It is only relevant to the immediate family. What's revealed to the public is out of context and out of proportion.

She discounts suggestions that telling the story was cathartic for her mother. "What motivated her might have been an element of feeling that, when she was writing it, the story was personal to her, that she wanted to tell it and not anyone else. I'm afraid I'm not at all happy trying to understand the motivation behind the film, which I think was partly commercial."

Miss Finzi does not deny the affair between her father and aunt and recalls that he would regularly sleep in her room. "Some mornings he'd be there. I knew perfectly well that there was the same closeness between dad and Jackie as between dad and Mum." It is claimed that other women also

came to the house. Although a child when her aunt came to stay, she does remember "the huge weight" of her aunt's "depression and sadness" at that time, the early 1970s.

The cellist Julian Lloyd Webber called for the producers to remove from their publicity posters the words "A True Story", saying that they had "really wound me up". He said that the director, Anand Tucker, who had told *The Times* this week that this was "a mythic story about two extraordinary women", was backtracking on whether it was entirely factual.

Another cellist, Steven Isserlis, said any claim that du Pré would be happy was "like saying the ugly sisters would be happy seeing themselves in a pantomime of *Cinderella*".

At the charity premiere of the film last night, two students from the Royal College of Music staged a protest. Jo Shouler, 22, said that her contemporaries were upset by the "trend for taking private lives" out of context.

"The general public always picks up on the salacious bits. People aren't going to remember her for her music. She deserves to be remembered for her music and nothing else," she said.

Miss Watson and the film's producer, Andy Paterson, asked the students to reserve their judgement until after they had seen the film.

A spokesman for the production company said that it was unlikely that Hilary or Kiffer would like to comment.

Menuhin wrong, page 21
Film preview, page 37



Clare Finzi, above, claims that her parents are sullying du Pré's name to make money. Below: du Pré's Kiffer, who "chose women who were lost", and du Pré's sister, Hilary



Gangland armourer is put behind bars

By Stewart Tendler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A GUN dealer suspected of being one of the biggest underworld armourers in Britain was in jail yesterday facing a long prison sentence for supplying sub-machineguns capable of firing 1,200 rounds a minute.

Police believe that Anthony Mitchell, 44, legally imported deactivated MAC-10 guns from the United States and converted them to fire live ammunition. Known in the underworld as Big Macs, they can fire 30 rounds in less than two seconds.

The deactivated guns sell for £300 to collectors. Mitchell's activated weapons were sold through a network in "assassination kits" with 9mm bullets and silencers at £1,100 each.

Mitchell was arrested after a lengthy operation involving M15, Scotland Yard, Strathclyde Police and the National Crime Squad. He will be sentenced next month after pleading guilty at the Old Bailey to four firearms charges. Five other charges have been left on the file.

When Mitchell was arrested by officers from the National Crime Squad, they found 50 deactivated sub-machineguns, and 20 breach blocks that could make them fire, in a workshop at Hove, Brighton. Experts say that converting the guns is a simple task.

Police have recovered a total of 73 activated and deactivated MAC-10s which they believe they can link through forensic science to Mitchell, who ran a legitimate gun business.

Nineteen have been linked by police to crimes committed by others, including one used in a murder in Brixton, South London. Others were found during drugs raids in Moss Side and Longsight, Manchester, and in Liverpool and Dublin. Three activated guns were seized from Paul Ferris, a Glasgow gangster, who is serving ten years.

Others were found in the boot of a car among a cache of 50 guns. Detectives believe they were bought on behalf of a group of jailed criminals who tipped off police, hoping for better conditions in jail or help for parole. Police took the guns but made no deal.

Mitchell, from Brighton, was a trained engineer and used his skill to make guns untraceable. Police suspect he supplied other types of guns too. Contacts he met in a Kent gun club helped to distribute the weapons. Last year four people, including Ferris, were convicted on gun offences and a South London man is awaiting sentence.

Football inquiry over a picture of sliding tackle

By Stephen Brinkley

IT WAS the kind of published apology that sent newspaper readers rummaging through their rubbish bins to find the offending item, they had missed. Why should the *Stroud News and Journal* be saying sorry for any offence caused by a group picture of a local amateur football team?

Yesterday it emerged that the photograph is being investigated by the Football Association, with the risk of a fine or ban from the Gloucestershire northern senior league.

The problem was that the photograph showed rather more of Craig Hampson, a star player for Whitminster

Stroud, a goal in such pre-match pictures: readers had spotted what the newspaper staff had missed, and the editor had complained to the Gloucester FA.

The picture shows the team lined up before a game with Brimscombe and Thurrock which ended in a 0-0 draw last week. The question to be the subject of an inquiry was whether Mr Hampson had been aware of the situation. The factory worker from Nailsworth is seen crouching down on the far right of the front row. He is smiling.

Dave Herbert, the Whitminster club secretary, said: "He

is very embarrassed. He assures me it was not intentional. He had forgotten to take the trunks he normally wears under his shorts. All he had to wear was a pair of boxer shorts which was why this happened without him realising."

Skip Walker, the paper's editor, said yesterday that she did not believe that the player's private parts had just slipped out. She said: "I have made a formal complaint about the player's behaviour."

Paul Britton, general secretary of the Gloucestershire FA, said: "Our disciplinary committee will take such action as it thinks fit."



Police quiz rugby player

The rugby player Wendell Sailor, 24, above, was questioned by police after being found in a car with a woman later charged with soliciting. The Australian, who plays union and league in Leeds, has a girlfriend and young son. Police said a man had been "given advice as to his conduct".

Badger contract killer is ordered to pay £1,000

By A Correspondent

A PENSIONER hired for £15 to kill a badger that had been digging up a lawn was ordered to pay over £1,000 in fines and costs after being spotted by a farmworker.

Joseph Thomas, 72, a retired pest control officer, was known locally as an odd-job man. But the job he was hired for by a landowner in Berton, Shropshire, meant killing a protected species, magistrates at Market Drayton were told.

Chris Dunbar, an RSPCA inspector, told the court that the badger had been killed by baiting, a particularly sadistic method. As the animal tried to wriggle out of the snare, the

wire would have worked its way into its flesh. He said that Thomas returned to the snare to find the animal and shot it. The snare was set in a field near a private garden but police have not found the man who hired Thomas.

Mr Dunbar said that a herdsman spotted Thomas carrying the corpse to his car. Thomas was said to have told him: "I'm just redressing the balance. You're best rid of them."

Later Thomas went to the police station and confessed. Mr Dunbar said: "He immediately admitted setting a snare to catch the badger, which is an offence under the

Wildlife and Countryside Act and shooting the badger which is illegal under the Badgers Act."

Mr Dunbar, who went to the scene, said: "I saw clumps of badger hair in a pool of blood. There was hair on the ground and in the snare and there were scratches all over the ground where the animal had tried to escape."

Thomas, of Stanton, who admitted the offence, was fined £250 for setting the snare and £500 for shooting the badger. He must also pay £293 costs.

After the case, Mr Dunbar said Thomas had refused to say who had hired him.

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4 HOME NEWS

Lib-Lab co-operation will survive, says Ashdown

The leader of the Liberal Democrats explained to Peter Riddell why he was retiring this summer

TONY BLAIR must be feeling lonely this morning. A month ago Peter Mandelson, his close ally, was forced to resign and last night Paddy Ashdown, his partner in the re-orientation of the Centre-Left started the political world by announcing his intention to stand down as Liberal Democrat leader this summer. The impact both on his own party and on the face of British politics will be far-reaching.

Mr Blair was one of the very few to know both Mr Ashdown's long-term intention and the timing of his announcement. The initiatives on Labour/Liberal Democrat co-operation of the past 18 months, including the joint Cabinet committee, were taken in the knowledge that Mr Ashdown would not be around for the whole Parliament.

When I spoke to him yesterday in his Westminster office, Mr Ashdown was adamant that this policy would "be able to continue without me at the helm". Nonetheless, he admits that some in his party disagree and that the leadership elec-

tion in the summer will provide an opportunity for this to be debated. Moreover, whoever becomes Lib Dem leader is bound to lack Mr Ashdown's standing and be less close personally to the Prime Minister.

Mr Blair has always talked highly of Mr Ashdown, whom he trusts and likes. Mr Blair may therefore be more distant from his successor, whatever his views on party links may be, so co-operation with the Lib Dems may become a lesser priority in Downing Street.

Mr Ashdown is, perversely, reluctant to admit the significance of his departure. He was even surprised at the stunned reaction of his office staff. For him, it is a long-agreed personal decision to step down after 11 years as leader. He agreed with his wife Jane before the last general election that he would not fight another one either as party leader or as MP for Yeovil. He does not want to

be an MP at 65. "I do not want to do the job less than full justice with all the physical energy it demands."

The announcement now is intended to give his successors, both as party leader and in Yeovil, time to become established before the next general election. He wants to leave on his terms, without being dragged or pushed out of the leadership. The question has "not been it, but when."

"I have never been an ordinary politician", he says. It has been "the passion of my life for the past 20 years, but I had a life before politics, as a Marine, diplomat, businessman and voluntary worker, and I want a life after politics". Typically, he says that, "during my life I have sailed a number of oceans and want to enjoy one more sea".

To outsiders, the decision seems more puzzling. Why now? After rebuilding his par-

ty from the shambles of the Liberal/SDP merger in 1988, he can now see the rewards on the horizon: elections under proportional representation for Scotland, Wales and Europe this spring, the prospect of referendums on a single currency and, more remotely, PR for Westminster, with the chance of participation in a Blair-led coalition after the next election. One or two of those in the know tried to dissuade him, but his decision with his wife has come first.

Mr Ashdown denies that his departure will disturb this strategy, or that he has been affected by criticism from within his party, before Christmas, that he was too close to Mr Blair. He points to the overwhelming endorsement from all but two of his MPs and by three-quarters of the party's federal executive for his strategy of "constructive opposition". His post-election objec-

tives have been substantially completed and the party is "in good order and in a stable position". He believes that Mr Blair is "emotionally and intellectually" committed in favour of the Jenkins Commission report on changing the voting system for the Commons.

An announcement had been considered before Christmas but was delayed, partly because of the row over the European elections Bill, until after the policy of co-operation with the Government was "reaffirmed and expanded" last Thursday. The joint Cabinet committee set up discussions on a common European foreign and security policy. The Bill bringing in PR for the European elections, one of the party's long-sought goals, has also received the recent rise in the party's opinion poll rating.

Lib Dems wonder whether his decision might have been different had Labour received a small overall majority in 1997 and the party been part of a coalition government, with Mr Ashdown as a senior min-



Mr Ashdown yesterday: "I have sailed many oceans and want to enjoy one more sea"

ister. He might have wanted to stay the course then; though yesterday he denied he had "the slightest interest in being a Cabinet minister in someone else's Cabinet, administering

someone else's policies on someone else's terms". Nonetheless, he remains convinced that the Lib Dems will be in national government within ten years and admits to sadness that he will not be leading his party when that happens.

Yet Mr Ashdown can look back on a highly successful period as leader since the igniting of the post-merger period, and the party's dismal showing in the Euro-elections of 1999 (when the party was eclipsed by the Greens). The party now has 46 MPs, the largest number since the days of Lloyd George, and controls

or shares control on local councils in many parts of the country. The Lib Dems are also likely to be players in the new devolved legislatures and gain several seats in May's Euro elections, thanks not least to PR.

Mr Ashdown sees his main achievement as helping Britain move towards a more pluralist style of politics. He seems happy, content and satisfied with his achievement, as he should be. But to a political world, obsessed with career ambitions, his departure remains a puzzle. But then Mr Ashdown has never fitted the Westminster stereotype.

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Kennedy is clear



Charles Kennedy, aged 39, MP for Ross, Skye and Inverness West. Spokesman for rural affairs, past president of the party. Not married.

He is popular and jovial. In the past he has devoted too much time to radio and TV chat shows, but has cut back his number of appearances. Will appeal to the rural vote and the younger generation. A *petit* voice critic of links with Labour, and a strong pro-European.

The Government thinks it could work with him at the helm.

Front runner. Odds 7-4 fav

Nick Harvey, 37, MP for Devon North. Not married. The party's chief campaign manager and communications coordinator. Seen as the continuity candidate, he is popular in some sections of the parliamentary party but is lacking broader appeal.

Mild-mannered, genial and hard-working. He is close to Paddy Ashdown and is likely to continue with existing policies. An arch Eurosceptic - the only Liberal Democrat to vote against the Maastricht treaty and is cautious about extending links with Labour.

Odds 6-1.

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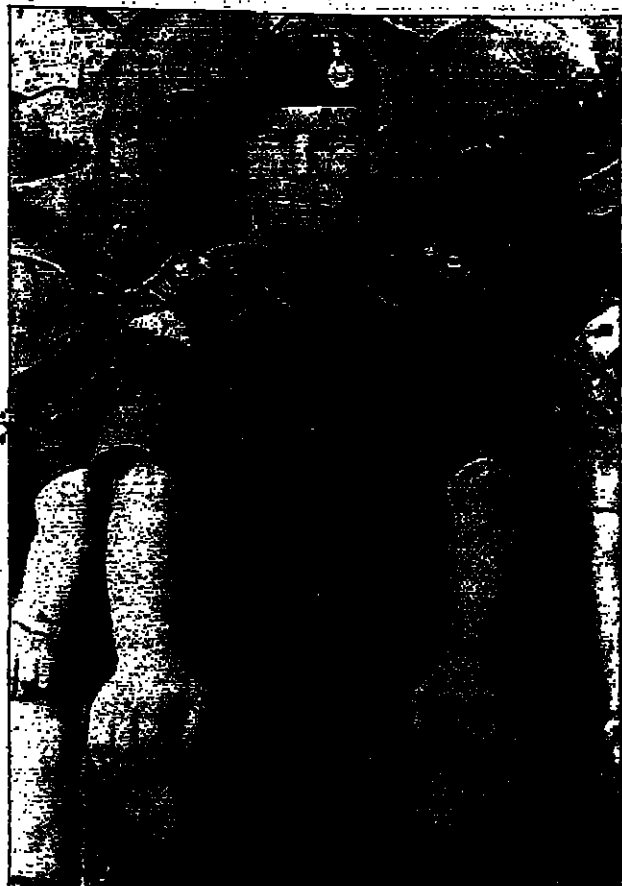
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Man of action: Paddy Ashdown on jungle patrol with the Royal Marines in the 1960s, applauded by colleagues after winning the party leadership in 1988, and, with his loyal wife Jane at his side, admitting an affair with his secretary

By ROLAND WATSON
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

How battle honours were won

THE signs were hardly encouraging when Jeremy John Durham Ashdown became the first leader of the reconstituted Centre party in 1988. He inherited a fractious coalition still infected by the bad blood that had flowed across the middle ground during the uneasy Alliance years. The bickering over the Liberal/SDP merger had degenerated to the point where the new party was chiefly lodged in the public consciousness because of its inability to choose a name. Things got worse before

they got better. In the European elections the next year the party fell into fourth place, behind the Greens, taking only 6 per cent of the vote. Mr Ashdown reacted by relaunching his fledgling party, changing its name again. Two months later the Liberal Democrats hit rock bottom in the opinion polls, attracting just 3 per cent support. Compared with then, the

party now has political riches: seats on a joint Cabinet committee, proportional representation for elections to Europe, a Scottish parliament and a Welsh assembly, and Liberal Democrat views sought and listened to in at least some of the corridors of No 10. There have also been election gains. In 1988 the party had 19 MPs but no MEPs. Today Mr Ashdown heads a party

of 46 MPs, the highest number since 1929. This June, it they will make gains on the three MEPs currently on side. The Liberal Democrats are the second party of local government, ahead of the Tories, with 4,633 councillors and 40 local authorities under their control. The success can be partly put down to Mr Ashdown's relentless targeting of likely

votes, as well as his party's instinct to fight as ruthlessly at street level as their leader's former comrades in the Marines. The party's popular support actually fell from 19.7 per cent in 1992 to 16.8 per cent in 1997. But by concentrating on building a powerbase in south-west England, as well as other pockets of likely third party support, the Lib Dems' parliamentary showing has shown

dramatic improvement. Mr Ashdown's greatest nights at the polls have been at by-elections. In 1990, success in Eastbourne foreshadowed Margaret Thatcher's downfall. During the last Parliament, famous nights in Newbury, Christchurch and Eastleigh showed which way the political winds were howling. Mr Ashdown has not hidden his discomfort with West-

minster and its ways, and his self-portrayal as a man more at home in the foothills of Bosnia than the Commons helped to fix him in voters' minds. As remarkable as his political achievements was his ability to overcome the disclosure of his five-month affair five years previously with his secretary. The day in February 1992 when he stood with his arm around his wife Jane to con-

firm his adultery was by far his lowest point. However, Mrs Ashdown's support and orders from John Major and Neil Kinnock that no political capital should be made out of the issue in the looming general election enabled him to put the episode behind him, though he never shook off the nickname "Paddy Pantsdown". Anybody looking for signals of yesterday's shock announcement, should cast their minds back to the last election campaign. Midway through, Mr Ashdown jumped ship for 24 hours to go to France to see his daughter Kate and new grandson, Matthias.

avourite for leadership



Simon Hughes, 47, MP for Southwark North and Bermondsey. Not married. Spokesman for health, fought off the gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell in 1983 by-election for his seat and won Labour stronghold after the death of Bob Mellish. Is keen on promoting environmental and urban issues but is said not to have broader appeal. He drives a yellow London taxi. Is publicly opposed to extended links with the Labour Party. A serious contender but he needs to widen appeal. Odds: 5-1.



Melvyn Campbell, 57, MP for Fife North East. Married, well-liked elder statesman. Seen as a possible caretaker leader until the next election. Unlikely to want to go on much longer and may decide not to put his hat in the ring. Was a close friend of the late John Smith, and is enthusiastic about links with the Labour Party, and was partly responsible for the latest extension of Lib-Lab links. Believed to be too serious and focused on policy issues rather than party campaigning. Odds: 8-1.



Malcolm Bruce, 54, MP for Gordon and the party's Treasury spokesman. Has been a vigorous critic of Gordon Brown's economic policies despite the growing co-operation between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Deeply disliked by the Government. If elected, all Liberal Democrat cooperation with Labour would cease immediately. A longshot for the leadership. Solid rather than flamboyant speaker, but always well-informed. Ran Paddy Ashdown's leadership campaign in 1988. Odds: 25-1.



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Breeder convicted of dog cruelty

Peter Foster
reports case of
prized animals
that died of
heatstroke in
back of a van

A CRUFTS champion breeder escaped serious punishment yesterday despite being found guilty of allowing ten of her most prized Newfoundland dogs to die of heatstroke in the back of a van.

Phyllis Colgan, 51, faced thousands of pounds of fines and up to six months in prison after the incident on May 15 last year when she carried 16 dogs, including two puppies, in an unsuitable vehicle.

However, magistrates gave Colgan an absolute discharge after deciding that she had suffered enough, both financially and emotionally, through the loss of the Newfoundlands, valued at more than £100,000.

During the two-day hearing Colgan, a Crufts judge recognised as one of the top breeders in Europe, wept as she described how she had fought to save the dogs when she discovered them suffering from heat exhaustion after stopping at a service station on the M1.

The court was told how she and her son-in-law, Duncan Elliott, had hired an unsuitable windowless van with a translucent glass-fibre roof for a 130-mile journey between Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and Matlock, Derbyshire.

Temperatures inside the van reached nearly 100F as the

sun shone through the roof. Ten of the thick-coated animals died, including Ellie May, a reigning Crufts best-of-breed worth £10,000.

Colgan pleaded not guilty, saying that the deaths were an accident. She did not know that the van roof would make the interior heat up to such an extent.

Leicester magistrates convicted her and Elliott on 16 counts of causing unnecessary suffering, but accepted that they had never intended to harm the dogs.

John Metcalf, chairman of the Bench, said: "You failed to exercise reasonable foresight in choosing this vehicle... But we are fully aware of the distress, trauma and financial loss you have already suffered."

They believed that nothing

similar would happen again. Colgan, of Winstar, Derbyshire, was ordered to pay £2,000 costs. Elliott, 34, of Bury St Edmunds, was also given an absolute discharge.

After the hearing, Dave Brown, the RSPCA Chief Inspector who led the investigation, welcomed the sentences. He said: "The case didn't fall into the normal category of cruelty that we deal with. Not for one moment did we feel she was deliberately cruel."

He considered Colgan fit to continue to own and breed animals.

Heddwyn Richards, chairman of the Newfoundland Club, of which Colgan is a member, said her future with the organisation would have to be reviewed. "This case serves as a reminder to all who transport dogs of the dangers of carrying animals in vehicles which are not suitable in hot weather."

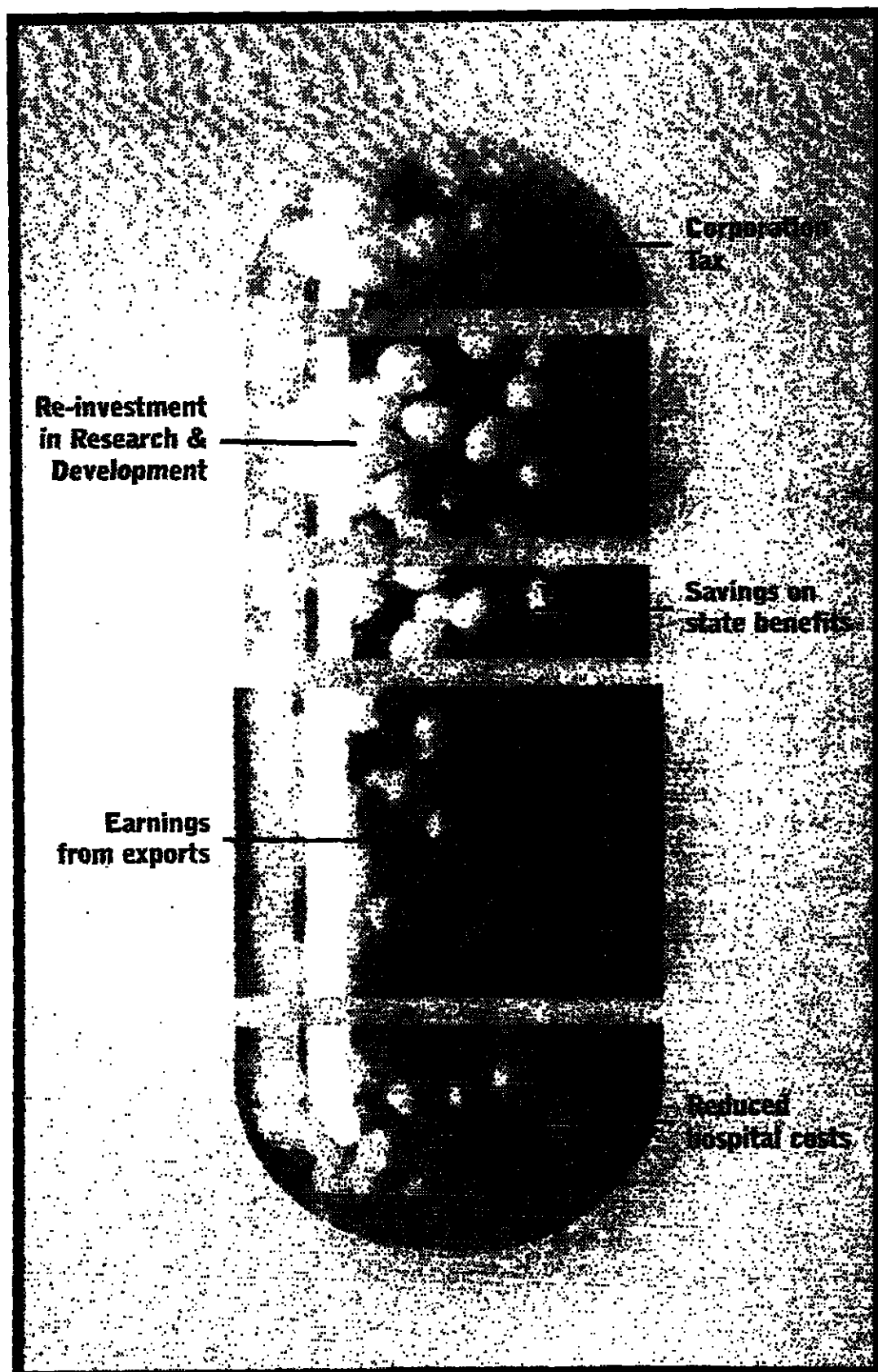
A Kennel Club spokesman said that it would examine evidence from the trial. "There is a range of sanctions available, stretching up to a ten-year ban from all dog shows."

Colgan refused to comment as she left court, but her lawyer, Ronald Thwaites, QC, said that she was considering an appeal.



Phyllis Colgan arriving at court yesterday. She said she had fought to save the dogs

Sickness Benefit.



TAKE CARE OF AN INDUSTRY THAT TAKES CARE OF BRITAIN

This year, the National Health Service will spend £6 billion on medicines - about 25 pence per person per day.

In return, the pharmaceutical industry will re-invest some 20% of its annual turnover in the search for new and improved medicines.

This investment will benefit the National Health Service by helping to reduce hospital admissions and saving over £10 billion a year on patient care.

The value of medicines goes far beyond supporting the NHS. The pharmaceutical industry provides employment for more than 300,000 people and exports over £5 billion of medicines a year, producing one of the country's largest trade surpluses of £2 billion.

Over the past five years pharmaceutical companies have committed over £2 billion in capital investment, and more is planned.

The benefit of the industry is also felt within the Treasury as pharmaceutical companies in Britain pay hundreds of millions of pounds in Corporation Tax each year.

But perhaps the industry is least known for its investment in education, funding half of all post-graduate training for GPs and supporting universities to the tune of £100 million a year.

If all this good work is not encouraged, it wouldn't just be the industry that would fall sick. It would be the country.



**The Association of the
British Pharmaceutical Industry**
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Charities thank generous readers

BY ELIZABETH JUDGE

READERS of *The Times* have been praised for their generosity by the charities that took part in the newspaper's Christmas Appeal. A total of £149,792 has been raised for three charities nominated by *The Times* at the beginning of last month.

The £65,792 raised for the Oxfam Bridge Appeal will build a bridge in Honduras to help people suffering after Hurricane Mitch. The loss of 98 bridges in November's hurricanes making it difficult for aid workers to distribute food to those stranded in the countryside and for farmers to reach the markets. Simon Collings, of Oxfam, said: "The response to this appeal far exceeded what we would have expected. *Times* readers will have made a real contribution to farmers trying to reconstruct their livelihood."

A total of £59,000 has been raised for the Alzheimer's Research Trust, another charity nominated by *The Times*. The money will fund a PhD student for three years as part of a group researching the risk factors that can lead to Alzheimer's disease.

The amount raised for The Sengstacke Cheetah Project was £25,000. It is the only current long-term study of wild cheetah, which, having once been widespread across much of Asia and Africa, are dwindling. Sarah Durant said the money would enable her to extend her study.

Man is accused of 1991 killing

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

A SOUTH AFRICAN fitness trainer arrested in Los Angeles after an international police hunt lasting eight years appeared in court yesterday charged with the kidnap and murder of a wealthy British businessman.

Neville van de Merwe, 29, who arrived at Heathrow on Tuesday after an extradition hearing in Los Angeles, was remanded in custody until January 27 by Dover magistrates after a brief hearing.

Simon Law, an accountant, vanished from his £500,000 17th-century farmhouse near Folkestone, Kent, on April 23, 1991. His body has not been found despite extensive searches of local woods.

Kent police investigations led them to South Africa and California, where Mr van der Merwe, the son of a South African millionaire, was arrested by FBI agents in September last year in the car park of the Los Angeles gym where he worked as a personal trainer.

Mr Law, 35 in 1991, had a double first in mathematics from Oxford University and was chairman at his local church.

Tam Phillips, Mr Law's girlfriend, and his parents, Jack and Nancy, were not in court yesterday.

Mrs Law said: "This has come as a surprise. The police have kept us in touch but we believed that there were extradition formalities still to go through."

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Minimum pay threatens end of the au pair

AU PAIRS could be left without a job and a home as a result of their intended inclusion in regulations on the national minimum wage, it was claimed yesterday.

Families said that the measure would double the cost of hiring an au pair from £40 to £80 a week. Employment agencies gave a warning that it would impose red tape on parents.

Critics also said that the Department of Trade and Industry's measures would turn au pairs from guests in the family home into hourly paid workers. There are an estimated 25,000 foreign au pairs in this country, mainly from eastern Europe.

Home Office guidelines have hitherto exempted au pairs from employment legislation and specify that they come here not as workers, but "for the purpose of learning the English language". The rules say that au pairs should work in the home for a maximum of five hours a day in return for a "reasonable allowance", normally £40 to £45 a week.

But the DTI's decision to impose from April the national minimum wage at £3 an hour

New regulations could put the cost beyond parents' reach, Alexandra Frean reports

for 18 to 21-year-olds and at £3.60 for people aged 22 and over, will push up rates to £75 to £90 a week.

Sandra Laundau of the International Au Pair Association, which represents more than 100 au pair agencies worldwide, said: "We will be the only country in the world to treat au pairs as workers. Every other country sees them as students on a cultural exchange."

"If the families who employ au pairs say they simply can no longer afford to keep them, where will they go? There could be thousands on the streets."

The measures threaten to undermine the Government's policy of making childcare

more affordable, particularly for lower-paid female workers such as nurses, for whom an au pair is often the only type of childcare they can afford.

They will also impose administrative burdens on both au pairs and their employers, many of whom will now be brought above the thresholds for paying tax and national insurance contributions on the au pair's wages.

Carola Herring, who employs an au pair to help look after her children aged four and two and who is now expecting another baby, said that she would not be able to afford the new rates. "For me this will be a total disaster. I took on an au pair to help me with the children and the new baby. It is wonderful to have someone else here to help. But there is no way I could justify having someone around if I have to pay her £3.60 an hour."

Her au pair, Marcela Franeckova, 23, who comes from Slovakia, said that she had come to Britain to learn the language and would be very sorry to have to go back home. Steve and Clair Rapley from London, who employ a Turk-



Carola Herring, left, whose Slovak au pair, Marcela Franeckova, helps with Lucinda and James, said the minimum wage would be a "disaster"

ish au pair to help look after their three children, aged 13, eight and six, said that they would be able to afford the higher wages, but were concerned that the measures would break the bond of trust that exists between them and their au pair.

Mr Rapley, who works in

the City, said: "The give and take of the relationship will go. As employers we will probably be much more demanding, making sure that things like the ironing are properly done."

Christine Little, chief executive of the Federation of Recruitment and Employment

Services, said that far from protecting au pairs from exploitation, the measures might make them more vulnerable to unscrupulous employers. "There is a possibility that the new laws may drive au pair recruitment underground with the very real danger that students could then be exploited."

The Department of Trade and Industry said that although au pairs had not been mentioned during the passage of the Minimum Wage Bill there had been no intention to exclude them. Families would be able to offset the costs of providing board and lodging against the minimum wage, to

a maximum of £20 a week. "If people want to reduce the cost of employing an au pair, they could reduce the number of hours she worked. Au pairs should not be regarded as cheap labour," a spokesman said.

Leading article, page 23

Inmates challenge detention in 'brutal jail unit'

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

TWO armed robbers yesterday challenged Jack Straw over their detention in Britain's toughest jail unit amid allegations that it runs a "brutal, illegal and coercive" regime.

A doctor at the special centre said that the health of one robber had deteriorated while kept in his cell for 23 hours a day and that if he remained in the unit he was likely to develop extreme psychotic symptoms, the High Court was told. The Prison Service defended conditions at the close supervision centre in Woodhill prison, Buckinghamshire, and said they were much better than those found in segregation units at other jails.

Outside the court Phil Wheatley, director of the top-security jail, said: "If we did not have this unit we would segregate prisoners for quite long periods and move them around from prison to prison. We do not think that is humane."

Rifat Mehmet, 41, serving 27 years for robbery, and Sean O'Connor, serving 12 years for robbery and possession of firearms, who are mounting the challenge, are among 30 disruptive and dangerous offenders in the specially designed unit where it costs £75,000 a year to hold a prisoner.

The centre, which opened last year, has been hit by a "dirty protest" in which offenders soiled cells walls with their own excrement.

Mehmet and O'Connor, both high-risk category A prisoners, want to have the legal right to make representations to the prison authorities over a decision to place them in the unit, plus the right to know the general outline of reports submitted about their continued detention in the centre.

Tim Owen, counsel for the men, told the court that being put in the £3 million unit meant a prisoner was "branded" as one of the most dangerous and disruptive inmates in the prison system. He said that a doctor at Woodhill had said that Mehmet's continued detention in the unit was likely to "affect him psychologically and produce psychotic symptoms in the extreme".

O'Connor, who had been moved at least six times before arriving at the centre, claimed in court papers that the philosophy behind the regimes was based on "coercion". Mr Justice Turner said he would give his judgment at a later date.

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NEWS IN BRIEF No rise in speeding penalty

A call by police to increase by £20 the penalties imposed on motorists caught speeding by roadside cameras has been rejected by ministers because of the lack of time for new legislation.

Police forces want to be allowed to keep an "administrative levy", charged on top of the fixed penalty for speeding, to fund the cost of speed cameras. They claim that seven out of eight cameras are not working because of shortages of cash to maintain the equipment and fit new film.

Chief constables claim that an extra £20 on top of the £40 fixed penalty would raise about £8 million to maintain existing cameras and install new ones. They estimate that the number of cameras could be quadrupled to 2,500 if money was channelled directly into police funds.

Blast survivor

A 58-year-old man escaped serious injury when an explosion destroyed his flat and damaged others in Exmouth, Devon. The man was rescued from the rubble of the ground-floor flat and taken to hospital in Exeter.

Birds poisoned

More rare birds of prey such as barn owls and red kites are dying after eating poisoned rodents. The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology found that 36 per cent of dead barn owls had signs of poisoning in 1995-96, up from 5 per cent in 1983-84.

3½ times too fast

A Porsche driver who was caught doing 3½ times the speed limit has been banned from driving for 18 months and fined £800. Andrew Digby, 32, from Billericay in Essex, had driven at 106 mph in a 30 mph zone.

Hanging death

Vicky Dawson, 13, who was found hanged by her school tie from a bunk bed at her home in Manchester last week, has died. It is thought she had slipped after using the tie to secure herself while putting up a poster of Leonardo DiCaprio.

£4,100 for toy car

A green Matchbox toy Mercedes made in 1968 was sold for £4,100 at auction in London. The green paint was used only in a trial by the Matchbox company Lesney and the car is thought to be the only surviving example.

Sea monster

A fisherman was not entirely delighted with the huge haul he caught in Lyme Bay, off Stidmouth, in Devon. Chris Watson had been fishing for sole, but netted a dead cow. It is thought the animal had drowned in recent floods.

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Drug spread shocks private school heads

Teachers underestimated problem among pupils, reports Hannah Betts

HEAD teachers at independent schools admitted yesterday that they had underestimated the drug problem among their pupils, especially among younger children.

A survey of pupils revealed that 30 per cent of 14 and 15 year-olds and more than 40 per cent of lower-sixth-formers admitted to having sampled drugs. At least half of both groups had been invited to try drugs and more than 10 per

cent of each age group had used drugs in the last month.

However, 30 per cent of heads had thought that below the sixth form, the proportion who had tried illegal drugs would be about 5 per cent.

Patrick Tobin, a head teacher who commissioned the study for the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, said that police, like schools, must bear some responsibility for the problem.

He said: "I see no evidence that police are interested in the small fry. They're always after Mr Big. But that does mean that our small fry get caught up in this. Adults are involved who are going unpunished, and that leaves its mark."

"Too often, we see the headline 'Top School Rocked by Drugs Scandal' as a sign of weakness and failure, when really it is a sign of care and action. The real danger for us

would be if we preferred silence to exposure. The problem is a reflection of society rather than our schools."

Mr Tobin, principal of Stewart's Melville College in Edinburgh, is a past chairman of the Conference, which represents 240 leading private schools. The survey compared the responses of 173 head teachers with the reaction of more than 2,000 pupils. Broadly, the figures mirrored national statistics from research into drug-taking among young people.

Cannabis and poppers were found to be the drugs of choice, with Ecstasy use not a significant statistic. More than 70 per cent of all boarding schools were found to use some form of drug testing, mostly to monitor students previously identified as users.

Eighty per cent of boarding schools and 69 per cent of day schools expelled automatically for students caught supplying drugs. Almost half of all boarding schools expelled pupils who bring drugs on to school premises. A similar number said they would inform police about drugs activity and most found the police co-operative.

On alcohol, one in three heads believed that about a quarter of their younger children probably drank alcohol regularly, but more than two-thirds of 14 and 15-year-olds said they had drunk alcohol in the last week.



Fields near Exeter after the Exe overflowed. Forecasters say the West Country can expect a respite from the rain

Expulsion is no longer the automatic sanction

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

INDEPENDENT schools are divided over whether to maintain a "zero tolerance" of drugs, but most now follow their associations' advice to suspend, rather than expel, first-time users of cannabis.

Most schools within the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference draw a distinction between cannabis and hard drugs, though few hesitate to expel dealers of either. Punishments for possessing cannabis vary widely.

Sevenoaks School in Kent makes random testing a condition of readmission for first-time offenders. Tommy Cook-

son, the headmaster, said that the school did not believe that automatic expulsion for drug offences was effective or reasonable. At Gordonstoun School in Elgin, pupils take part in drawing up the drug policy and suspension is the normal punishment for a first offence.

However, Rugby School, in Warwickshire expels all pupils found with drugs and tests those who are suspected of taking or selling them. A positive test does not attract immediate punishment, but repeat offending leads to expulsion.

Glenalmond College, Perth-

shire, warns pupils that any connection with drugs will result in immediate expulsion.

American private schools generally take a softer approach. Sidwell Friends School in Washington DC, Chelsea Clinton's *alma mater*, has no set policy, and all incidents are dealt with "case by case". St Paul's boarding school in New Hampshire has a disciplinary committee for offenders, but dismissal is not necessarily immediate.

Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut, however, immediately expels all students found with illegal drugs.

Firefighters act as water rescuers

By ALEX O'CONNELL

TORRENTIAL rain has caused extensive flooding in the West Country and fire brigades have had to rescue several people trapped by the rising water.

One woman was helped from a first-floor window by emergency workers using a boat after her house in Chew Magna, Somerset, was flooded. A man was rescued by firefighters in Newton Abbot, Devon, after rising water forced him to climb on the roof of his car. At West-

bury on Trym, near Bristol, firefighters towed a family of four to safety after they were trapped in their car. One elderly woman spent the night upstairs at her cottage at Iron Acton, near Bristol, after the ground floor was flooded. She waited until morning before calling firefighters as she did not want to trouble them.

Across England and Wales, the total number of river warnings has risen to 171: six red, 38 amber and 127 yellow. The Environment Agency has issued flood warnings across Kent and Sussex, saying that

the saturated ground caused by continued rain poses a serious risk. The River Exe has overflowed at Exeter, flooding fields.

The Environment Agency said that its staff had dealt with more than a hundred incidents of flooding and landslips.

Forecasters said that the West Country could expect some respite from the rain during the next few days, as clouds move eastwards to deliver a drenching to the South East.

Weather forecast, page 26

Inquest witness gets jail warning

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A SCHOOL lollipop-lady was warned yesterday by a coroner that she could go to jail if she was lying as she explained her role in a mysterious death.

Lena Dean, 72, was giving evidence to an inquest in Stockport into the death of Jean Mycock, 79. She insisted that she had tried to revive Mrs Mycock with the kiss of life when she collapsed at her home in Compstall, near Stockport. But a forensic pathologist, John Rutherford, said that bruising on her body suggested strangulation.

Mrs Dean could not explain why Mrs Mycock had made out a cheque to her for £5,000 shortly before her death, which Mrs Dean tried to cash the following day.

When friends of the dead woman called on her to take her to a church meeting, Mrs Dean tried to run out of the front door but finding it locked she went instead to crouch

down in the front room. She felt sick, she told the inquest.

A police investigation into Mrs Mycock's death last February proved inconclusive.

Mrs Dean told the inquest she had gone to Mrs Mycock's house to ask about the cheque, and take some items for a church sale. Mrs Mycock had come to the door wearing a nightgown and looking for help. She had helped her back into her kitchen but she collapsed.

John Pollard, the South Manchester Coroner, warned her that she was giving evidence on oath: "If you are lying you will be guilty of perjury and will go to prison."

He recorded an open verdict. It was a "bizarre set of circumstances", he said. "I am not persuaded beyond all reasonable doubt that Mrs Mycock was unlawfully killed but I am far from persuaded that on the balance of probabilities she died of natural causes."

Will to win cost athlete his life

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

AN ATHLETE who took up bodybuilding after being beaten on the race track died from steroid abuse, an inquest ruled yesterday.

As a teenager Matthew Cook trained alongside future champions such as Roger Black, but after coming second to last in a race in 1986 he never put on his running shoes again.

He won hundreds of trophies for bodybuilding but destroyed his health with the steroids, the inquest in Bournemouth was told. "The person may look very fit but the heart is not capable of normal function," Milena Lesma, a consultant pathologist at Royal Bournemouth Hospital, said.

Mr Cook, 30, a father of two, collapsed on Christmas Eve at his home in Bournemouth. A clot from his enlarged heart starved his brain of oxygen and he died in hospital three days later.

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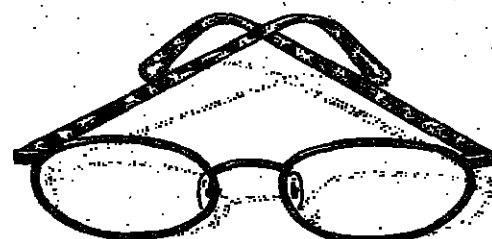
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Expert calls for fluoride in salt and milk

Helen Rumbelow on a strategy for curbing tooth decay

FLUORIDE could be added to salt and milk rather than water so that consumers could choose this method of reducing tooth decay, dental experts said yesterday.

Those opposed to the idea of fluoride being added to the water supply as a national policy argue that people would not be able to opt out without buying expensive bottled water.

But Philip Holloway, Professor of Dentistry at the University of Manchester, says that offering it in salt or milk would ensure that enough fluoride was consumed to prevent decay while allowing people to choose non-adulterated alternatives.

"We know that fluoridised salt reduces caries levels, which is important in areas

where fluoride cannot be added to the water supply," he said at the British Nutrition Foundation conference in London. In Scotland, where none of the regional companies is considering fluoridising water, there is a pilot study into fluoridised salt.

Fluoridised salt was available to 150 million people round the world, Professor Holloway said. One example was the Caribbean, where there were difficulties in adding fluoride to the water supply. In Switzerland, it had been on sale for 40 years.

It would not be promoted here in a way that increased people's overall consumption of salt. "The experience in Switzerland shows that it does not increase salt consumption," he said.

Adding fluoride to milk was also being examined, with a trial under way at the Liverpool Dental School, where fluoridised milk was being given to schoolchildren with parents' permission.

Only 10 per cent of the population, notably the people of Birmingham, have fluoride added to their tap water. Professor Holloway said that water fluoridation was the main way of reducing the increased rates of tooth decay among the poor. "Fluoridation of water transcends the social differences in the condition of teeth," he said. In Hartlepool, where the water is fluoridised, 0.92 of five-year-olds had tooth decay, compared with a rate of 1.09 per cent in southwest Surrey, a relatively affluent area.

Ursula Arens, a senior scientist at the foundation, said children at greater risk of tooth decay, such as those from poor families, should be given fluoride drops if they did not have access to fluoridised water.



Sentimental attachment: one of this year's models congratulating Saint Laurent, whose enduring success offers no incentive for him to move on

Saint Laurent replays his greatest hits

FROM LISA ARMSTRONG, FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

YVES SAINT LAURENT encapsulates much about France today: the enduring traditions, the bourgeois, set-in-stone elegance from the 1970s, and the sentimental attachment to the past.

Yesterday, as usual, he received a standing ovation when he showed his haute couture collection in the heavily gilded and frescoed salons of the Hotel Intercontinental in Paris. But the applause, as so often at his shows, was for past achievements rather than anything the audience, which included YSL faithfuls Catherine Deneuve and Jacqueline de Ribes, had just seen.

Saint Laurent was a great designer of his day. It's hard to think of any British designer who would still be enjoying plaudits 40 years after starting out. On the other hand, the encores mean that there's no incentive for him to move his collection on beyond the dire pussycat bows and dated pleated trousers that came — oh so slowly — down his catwalk.

This was in effect, a rehash of many of his past hits: the see-through chiffon skirts, the toga evening dresses, the square-shouldered jackets, the safari

suits ... We've seen them all many, many times. And although his couture client base is clearly drawn from the more mature set, the averagely chic, cosmopolitan client, whether she is 25 or 65, does not dress like this any more.

The evening wear was better, not because there was anything new but because much of what Saint Laurent produces for night really is classic. A couple of black chamilly lace and chiffon column dresses whipped around the body like mist and another black fitted evening dress, with a bodice of lace that clung to the model as snugly as a tattoo, were the stars that shone like good deeds in a very dull world. And he still knows how to please the photographers: a rather silly wedding dress that consisted of silk roses fashioned into a bikini used up more film than the entire preceding 45 minutes.

The Paris couture week comes to an end today after 24 shows in which the likes of the Russian designer Yurashkin and the artsy Dutch duo Viktor and Rolf were invited to keep up the numbers of a depleted regiment of traditional French couture houses.



Vieux jeu: 1999 versions of the square-shouldered jacket with pussycat bow and an evening dress, but will his chic clients still wear them?

Say cheese and save your smile

BY HELEN RUMBELLOW

THE British habit of serving cheese after pudding, sneered at by Francophiles who eat their cr me br le after the C mebert, has been approved by dentists.

Likewise, a handful of peanuts is the perfect chaser to a glass of bitter gin and tonic, according to a report by the British Nutrition Foundation on preventing tooth decay.

People should stop thinking that sugar alone causes cavities, and concentrate on foods that leave their mouth acidic, said Mike Edgar, one of the authors of the report, *Oral Health: Diet and Other Factors*. It advises changing behaviour that was previously thought to be tooth friendly. For example, if you drink orange juice for breakfast do not brush your teeth for at least half an hour afterwards.

Teeth start to rot when the mouth's acid levels rise above a certain point.

where pH levels are below 5.5 — which makes the minerals in tooth enamel aqueously and leach away. This rise in acid levels can be caused by the conversion of sugar by the bacteria in plaque, but also by naturally acidic foods such as orange juice or the lemon slice in a gin and tonic. An apple can have the same damaging effect as a Mars Bar.

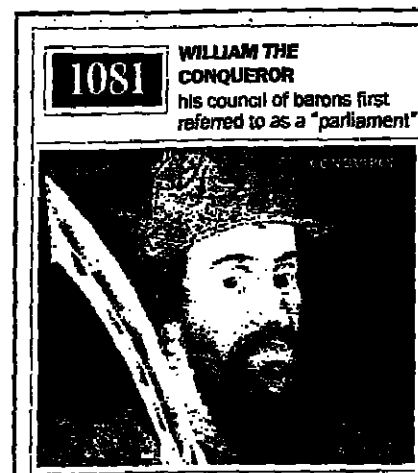
After an orange juice, the acidity in the mouth will make teeth enamel soft and vulnerable. Brushing will begin to rub away the top surface. Instead, according to Professor Edgar, other kinds of foods should be eaten to counteract acid levels.

The two most effective are cheese and peanuts, thought to be good and healthy because of high protein levels. The calcium in cheese also helps to strengthen teeth. It is best eaten no later than 20 minutes after the acidic foods.

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1081 WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR
his council of barons first referred to as a "parliament"



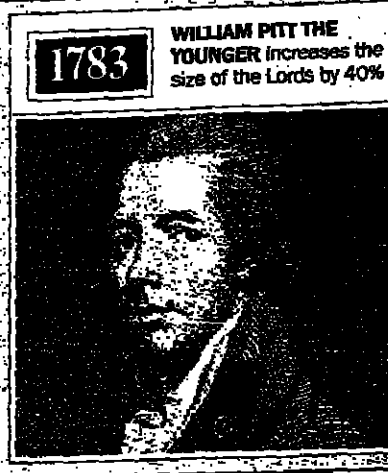
1265 SIMON DE MONTFORT
imprisons Henry III and holds first parliament without the King



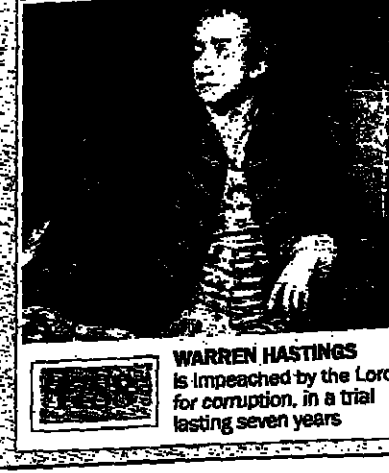
1539 HENRY VIII
dissolves the monasteries; lords temporal outnumber lords spiritual for first time



1649 OLIVER CROMWELL
briefly abolishes the Lords after execution of Charles I



1783 WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER
increases the size of the Lords by 40%



1783 WARREN HASTINGS
is impeached by the Lords for corruption, in a trial lasting seven years

History dignifies Kings' hooligans

Alan Hamilton traces the lineage of a chamber that has gracefully survived the clamourings of reform

A GENTLEMANLY dispute is rumbling among the 799 hereditary members of the Upper House of the Mother of Parliaments. Who can lay claim to the oldest title in the Lords?

Richmond Herald, who may sound like a local newspaper but is a senior genealogist at the College of Arms, has been summoned to adjudicate. The argument is certainly arcane and probably irrelevant but, if the proposed reforms of the House of Lords come to pass, it could become an important footnote to those who write the history of the last parliamentary assembly in the democratic world to which admission is largely by accident of birth.

One of the combatants jousting in the lists is Lord de Ros, a furniture maker who lives in Ireland and whose attendance record at Westminster appears to be nil, but whose title was created by Henry III in 1264. Against him is Lord Mowbray, Segrave and Stourton, known for his piratical eyepatch, decent attendance record and a scion, Ed, who is a BBC newsreader.

Mowbray was created by Edward I in 1283 but there is some dispute as to whether de Ros did anything about his summons to the peerage 19 years earlier or whether he put it behind the clock and forgot about it.

It may not matter a jot but the Lords is deeply conscious of its history, blurred at the edges though it may be, and it is a reminder that most hereditary titles represented in the Lords are far more recent than

is generally imagined. A surprising number of English noble houses are Victorian.

But every new royal dynasty, from Plantagenet to Hanover and most especially Stuart, has created its clutch of peerages as rewards to the loyal.

The Lords traces its origins, if dimly, to the witenagemot, or assembly of wise men, with which English Saxon kings surrounded themselves. They were the most prominent landowners and churchmen, and it was part of their role to choose the next king, not always plumping for the obvious heir but selecting the best man for the job.

History took a slightly backward step with the arrival of William the Conqueror, who

the barons had grown angry at the bullying and autocratic ways of monarchy. In 1265 Simon de Montfort took the barons' cause a stage further: furious at Henry III's constant demands for cash and his unwillingness to let those who coughed up decide how it should be spent, de Montfort captured and briefly imprisoned the king, and chaired the Parliament himself.

The experiment was brief: de Montfort was subsequently defeated and killed at the Battle of Evesham, his peers having taken their view that he was just as unreasonable and overbearing as the king himself. But the idea of parliaments caught on and Henry's successor Edward I held them

as distinct from the churchmen who packed the chamber, began gradually to emerge as a body whose rights and lands came to them by inheritance.

All changed in 1539 with Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. Abbots and priors who had been entitled to sit in Parliament were booted out, leaving only bishops as Lords Spiritual.

They were outnumbered for the first time by the Lords Temporal, who collectively called themselves peers to indicate that, whether duke, earl or viscount, they were equal in the aristocracy of the Upper House.

During Elizabeth I's reign there were never more than 26 bishops and 65 lords; by the end of her reign much of the old nobility had disappeared, either through extinction or execution for treason. James I arrived from Scotland after his accession in 1603 and created a band of new peers from among Stuart supporters.

The Lords divided evenly during the Civil War but was abolished by the Commonwealth for a brief period after Charles I's execution in 1649. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent Bill of Rights, which finally established the supremacy of Parliament over the Crown, might have done for the Lords. But some of the strongest supporters of reform were the old noblemen of the Lords itself. They kept their seats.

The great Reform Acts of the 19th century might well have been strongly opposed by the Lords, but the Upper House chose the path of strategic with-



Lord Mowbray, Segrave and Stourton lays claim to the oldest title in the Upper House

drawal from blocking the Commons proposals. They were nothing like as supine in 1909, when they blocked the Budget proposals of the Chancellor, David Lloyd George. Their intransigence resulted in a significant nail in their coffin.

Asquith's Parliament Act of 1911 removed the power of the Lords to destroy Commons legislation, allowing them merely to delay it. The powers of delay were further restricted in an Act of 1949.

Harold Macmillan introduced one of the most significant reforms in the Lords' history in 1958, when he invented the life peer, allowing unlimited numbers of persons of either sex to be appointed to the

Upper House but with no hereditary rights.

Now Tony Blair is attempting a much more radical reform. It is unlikely to cause much loss of sleep to Lord de Ros, but Lord Mowbray has reason to be more than a little miffed.

Leading article, page 23

Mowbray mourns loss of mavericks

BY MARK INGLEFIELD
POLITICAL REPORTER

LORD MOWBRAY feels that the loss of hereditary peers will be a loss to British political life, not least because of the fact that their privileged position allowed them a large degree of independence.

"Usually we have had enough (money) not to be too ambitious, whereas in the other House they usually do it for themselves. We have a more long-term view," he said.

"Of course I'm sad it's coming to an end. We've been a good example by and large. I can see the faults with us, mind. None of us has a God-given right to govern."

Lord Mowbray retired from active political life in 1980 after serving as Tory opposition Whip and the Government's Environment spokesman in the late 1960s and 70s. Since then he has worked in business and oversees the running of a small farm.

Lord Mowbray served as a lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards during the Second World War, losing an eye while fighting in France. As a result, he sports the black eyepatch that has made him one of the most easily recognisable figures in the chamber.

Although he sees change in the Lords as inevitable, Lord Mowbray feels that the Government has introduced its proposed reforms in a heavy-handed fashion.

"We've had the whole thing thrust down our throats," he said. "It should have been a debate between all the parties."

LAURA ASHLEY



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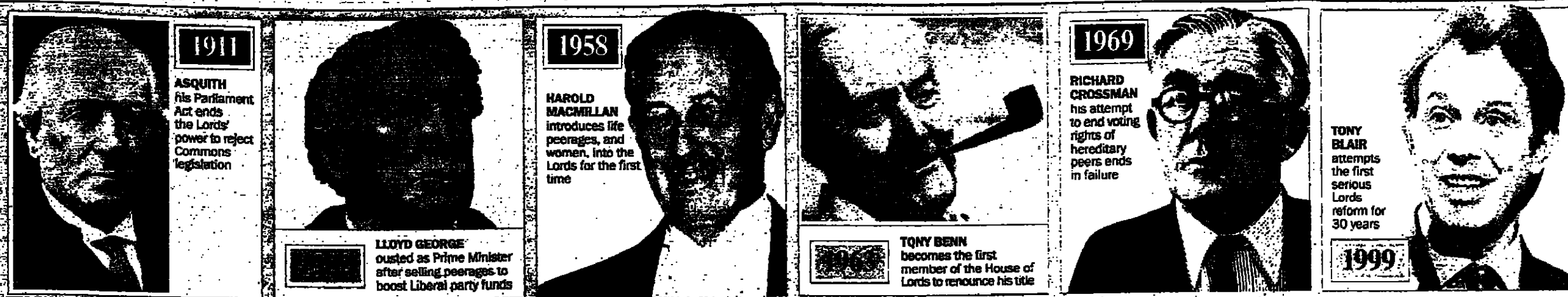
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DELL



Commons keeps power to lord it

Balance to tip in Labour's favour

By JAMES LANDALE

THE House of Lords must remain subordinate to the House of Commons regardless of any reforms of its role, composition and powers, the Government said yesterday.

In its detailed terms of reference to the Royal Commission set up yesterday, the Government said: "The second chamber must have a distinctive role and must neither usurp, nor threaten, the supremacy of the first chamber."

The 50-page White Paper, *Modernising Parliament: Reforming the House of Lords*, said that a new look Upper House should have enough "legitimacy" to do its job but must remain "subordinate".

Although the Government has given the Royal Commission a broad remit, the specific terms of reference in the White Paper give the clearest indication yet of what a future Lords

White Paper says Upper House's distinctive role must not threaten first chamber, writes James Landale

might look like. The commission must report by December 31 this year.

The Government says that a reformed Lords should take "particular account" of the present nature of the constitutional settlement, including the newly-devolved institutions, the impact of the Human Rights Act and developing relations with the European Union.

The key point is the emphasis on possibly having members of the Scottish parliament, and Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies sitting in the reformed Lords. "The second chamber could provide a

forum where diversity could find expression and dialogue, and where such an expression could work towards strengthening the Union."

POWERS

Many of the Lords' powers exist only in convention and are rarely used. The Government suggests that these should be either "institutionalised" or reduced. "A better approach might be to reduce the theoretically-available powers, recognising that they might as a consequence be used more frequently." The commission could look at how long the Lords could delay legislation; whether Bills introduced in the Lords could be forced through; the need for a procedure when peers repeatedly send Bills back to the Commons; the possibility of formal conciliation procedures; and whether peers should be able to delay secondary legislation.

COMPOSITION

The Royal Commission will be able to consider a nominated chamber, one which is directly or indirectly elected, or a mixed chamber. "The Government's own view is that the best solution is likely to be found among the more conventional options of nomination and election." The White Paper comes down firmly

against having too many directly elected members, saying that it could "share many of the disadvantages of a wholly elected second chamber".

Instead, it says that a mixed House "allows a variety and breadth of membership and the combination of the best features of the present House with an indubitably democratic method of selection".

RELIGIONS

The Government recognises the multicultural nature of British society and "shall be looking for ways of increasing the representation in the Lords of other religious traditions", in particular the established Church of Scotland.

EUROPE

The White Paper suggests that a reformed Lords should have an increased role in scrutinising the European Union. It suggests that the commission "may also wish to examine whether there is a possible role which could be played by MEPs in the second chamber". The role of current European committees in the Lords could be expanded.

JUDICIAL ROLE

The commission should examine whether the second chamber should remain the highest court of the land, with law lords sitting in both judicial and legislative roles, but the White Paper says that it would not be able to examine the creation of a separate supreme judicial authority.



Leading ladies: Baroness Jay of Paddington and Commons counterpart Margaret Beckett

LABOUR is poised to become the largest single party in the House of Lords for the first time once hereditary peers have been removed.

Tony Blair has promised to appoint about 50 Labour peers to bring the Labour benches up to "broad parity" with the Conservatives. The most likely option would be for Labour to have one more peer than the Tories.

The Government indicated yesterday that it was "minded" to accept a deal put forward by Lord Weatherill, the crossbencher convenor, to save 91 hereditary peers during the transition house. An amendment to this effect will be introduced during the Lords stages of the Bill scrapping the voting and sitting rights of hereditary peers.

If the 91 hereditary peers remain, both parties would have about 212 peers, the Liberal Democrats with 48, and the crossbenches with 147. The numbers are not fixed: the Liberal Democrats in particular believe that they should have more than three hereditary peers staying on.

The powers and functions of the House of Lords will remain the same during the transition period, which ministers insist will last for only a few years. The 26 Church of England bishops will remain in the Lords during this time.

ESTIMATED INTERIM LORDS IF CRANBORNE DEAL SURVIVES			
(91 hereditaries remain, about 57 new Labour life peers appointed)			
	Conservative	Labour	Total
Conservative	172	304	476
Labour	157	18	175
Liberal Democrats	45	24	69
Crossbenches	119	202	321
Other	10	58	68
Bishops			26
Peers on leave of absence or without writs of summons			130
Total houses			1,067

ESTIMATED INTERIM LORDS IF CRANBORNE DEAL SURVIVES			
(91 hereditaries remain, about 57 new Labour life peers appointed)			
	Conservative	Labour	Total
Conservative	172	41	213
Labour	242	2	244
Liberal Democrats	45	3	48
Crossbenches	119	28	147
Other			10
Bishops			26
Total houses			644

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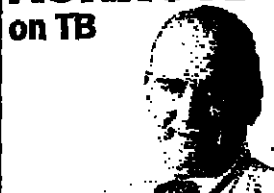
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Tory fixer may swing
opponents of reformBY VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

MAN IN THE CHAIR

HE is an arch political fixer but chairmanship of the Royal Commission was one "fix" even Lord Wakeham could not have anticipated. When he was sounded out about Lords reform in a call from Downing Street last week, he thought that he was being consulted about possible names for the commission.

It crossed his mind he was being considered as a member but certainly not as chairman. Like many others at Westminster, he assumed the job would go to Lord Butler of Brockwell, the former Cabinet Secretary.

The Government's thinking became clearer at a meeting with Tony Blair on Monday. The Prime Minister decided that the job needed a political heavyweight and he was keen to attract a senior Tory to pull round opponents to reform. As a former Leader of the Commons and the Lords, Lord Wakeham also has a rare political insight into the workings and purposes of both Houses. He also knows everyone and

has the ability to bang heads together to reach consensus. Mr Blair was extremely keen — the two men have forged a close relationship following the Labour victory with the peer offering sage advice on a range of matters including the Royal Family and privacy issues. Lord Wakeham is also credited with toughening up the rules between newspapers and the paparazzi following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

But Mr Blair did not know Lord Wakeham's views about Lords reform and doubted that he had the time to do it. The chairman of the Press Complaints Commission has never uttered a word on the subject in public. But at an hour-long meeting in Downing Street on Monday, Lord Wakeham made clear he was no "revolutionary" and he did not wish to see a revamped Lords diminish the standing of the Commons as the "pre-eminent chamber in Parliament". As a former MP and



Wakeham has a close relationship with Blair

Chief Whip, he has a deep sense of parliamentary tradition. He was sceptical about an elected second chamber and hoped it would continue to attract people from all walks of life to act as "a proper revising chamber".

Lord Wakeham, 66, also believes that the Upper House should have an independent streak and should not be frightened to challenge the Government. Yesterday he did not wish to discuss the manner of

his appointment, but said: "I'm delighted to accept the job and I think the terms of reference are sufficiently wide to let us look at the issue in the round. I will seek to build a consensus on the best way forward."

He was expected to meet Sir Richard Wilson, Cabinet Secretary, and Sir Quentin Thomas, head of the Cabinet Office constitution unit, to discuss arrangements for the commission, which is expected to have about ten members. Gerald Kaufman has been nominated by Labour and Rabbi Julia Neuberger for the Lib Dems. Lord Wakeham's appointment was largely acclaimed yesterday as a "masterstroke" but some expressed reservations whether he would get to grips with "the broad picture" of the reform.

Lord Wakeham, a former chartered accountant, lost his first wife, Roberta, in the IRA bombing of the Grand Hotel, Brighton, and suffered serious leg injuries. He subsequently married his secretary, Alison Ward, who had helped to nurse him.



Viscount Cranley, who was "relishing the challenge of taking on duties in the Lords"

Realism tinged with regret

THE PEER'S SON

VISCOUNT CRANLEY, son and heir of the 7th Earl of Onslow, has long been resigned to the fact that he probably will not follow his father onto the red leather benches of the Lords (Mark Inglefield writes). The concept of hereditary presence in the governing chamber in the 21st century is

unacceptable," the viscount admits. The earldom was created in 1801 and the family has also produced three Speakers for the Commons.

Rupert Cranley, 31, an insurance broker, laments the fact

that he will not be allowed to play a part in the nation's political affairs. "I have a huge interest in current affairs and politics and was relishing the challenge of taking on these duties and responsibilities," he said. "I felt I might make a contribution with an independent mind."

TIMETABLE FOR REFORM

January 20: Bill to repeal hereditary peers introduced. Royal Commission set up to examine further changes.
December 31, 1999: deadline for Royal Commission to report.
Spring 2000: first committee of both Houses in Parliament to set up its cross-party representatives on the Royal Commission and to clarify the detailed changes.

Summer 2000: committee likely to report. Government considers response and draws up draft legislation.
November 2000: first possible opportunity for Government to introduce legislation making changes.
2001: progress of commission, committee and Government is delayed, this is most likely year for legislation to be introduced.

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APPOINTMENTS

BY JAMES LANDALE

TONY BLAIR will create a powerful appointments commission to vet potential life peers once hereditary lords have been removed.

The body's members will be appointed by the Government under the rules laid down by Sir Len Peach, the Commissioner for Public Appointments. These will ensure that the body is not packed with politically partisan appointees.

The White Paper said the commission will contain three representatives of the main political parties, an independent chairman and at least three independent members.

The Prime Minister will give up his sole right of patronage to recommend life peers to the Queen. Mr Blair will allow the commission to nominate independent crossbench peers. He has also promised not to interfere over the nominees put forward by the other party leaders.

However, the Prime Minister will retain control over the most important power; namely how many new peers each party should have. The Political Honours Scrutiny Committee, much of whose work will be taken over by the appointments commission, will continue to vet honours such as knighthoods.

The White Paper said the commission will operate "an open and transparent nominations system for cross-bench peers, both actively inviting public nominations and encouraging suitable bodies to make nominations".

ROYAL ROLE

BY JAMES LANDALE

THE Prince of Wales and four royal dukes will be thrown out of the House of Lords when hereditary peers lose their right to sit and vote.

After talks with the Royal Family, the Government has agreed that the Prince and the Dukes of Edinburgh, York, Gloucester and Kent should be treated like any other hereditary peers.

The move will signal the end of almost 800 years of royal representation in Parliament. In practice it will make no difference: the Dukes of Edinburgh, Kent and York have never spoken. The last time the Prince of Wales spoke was in 1975. It had been thought that royal peers might be allowed to stay on. But the Royal Family is understood to have accepted that the move would be unpopular with the public.

However, the Government has thrown a lifeline to six hereditary peers of first creation. These are people who have been given an hereditary title rather than a life peerage and who can pass it on. They include the Earl of Snowdon, the Earl of Longford, the former Labour minister, Viscount Whitelaw, the former Tory Cabinet minister, and three more Tories — Lord Aldington, Viscount Eccles, and Lord Eroll of Hale.

Most are of an age that might preclude them from staying on during the interim chamber. All the peers yesterday received letters from Tony Blair asking if they wanted to receive life peerages.

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Supercrop gains outweigh the risks, say peers

Nigel Hawkes reports on clearest endorsement so far

GENETICALLY modified crops have been given the approval of a House of Lords inquiry which says that the benefits far outweigh the risks. Agriculture, industry, consumers and even the environment stand to gain, the Select Committee on the European Communities concludes in a report published today. It is the clearest endorsement in Britain of a controversial technology that has made much quicker strides in the United States than in Europe.

Monsanto, the leading company in the field, is delighted by the judgment of the committee, which set out to examine changes in the European directives governing genetically modified crops in the European Community.

But Greenpeace accused the committee, chaired by Lord Reay, of being "the only group in our society that has fallen for Monsanto's advertising campaign". The environmental group renewed its call for a ban on use of the crops.

Lord Reay listed the benefits as "higher crop yields, better nutritional content in foods, fewer herbicides and pesticides, and cheaper food for consumers. But like any new technology there are risks and it should only be applied when they can be assessed and controlled."

The committee acknowledges that Britain's regulatory structure is "very rigorous" but believes that it can be improved by establishing a committee responsible for providing advice on overall policy. It could examine such issues as the long-term impact of genetically modified crops on the environment. The members should include consumer representatives.

Lord Reay said that we "know more about novel foods than we do about staples". The potato, for example, would not pass the scrutiny of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes because it can in certain circumstances produce harmful poisons.

He called for much quicker approval of genetically modified crops in Europe, where it typically takes two years compared with seven months in the United States.

The committee supports the controversial "terminator" technology, which causes genetically modified crops to produce sterile seeds, preventing farmers from saving seed for use in the next season. In the developed world, provided that farmers' economic prosperity is not unduly affected, "we do not consider sterile crops to be a problematic development".

Advantages include consistent seed quality and no risk of the creation of "superweeds" by the escape of pesticide-resistant genes. But in the developing world, "most farmers would view the prospect of having to buy seeds each year with grave concern".

Equally controversial is the Lords' view that modified crops have much to offer organic farmers. This contradicts the view of the Soil Association that they are "the most serious threat ever to the organic farming movement".

The Lords say that genetically modified crops require fewer pesticides and fertilisers.

John Sauven, a Greenpeace campaigner, said that the report indicated how out of touch the House of Lords had become. "Genetically engineered food is inherently unpredictable and once such crops escape or are deliberately released into the environment and the food chain, they cannot be recalled."

In light of this, we should act in a precautionary way and halt the release of genetically modified organisms into the environment.

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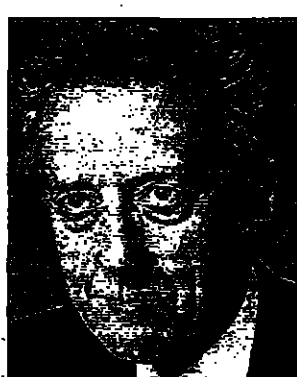
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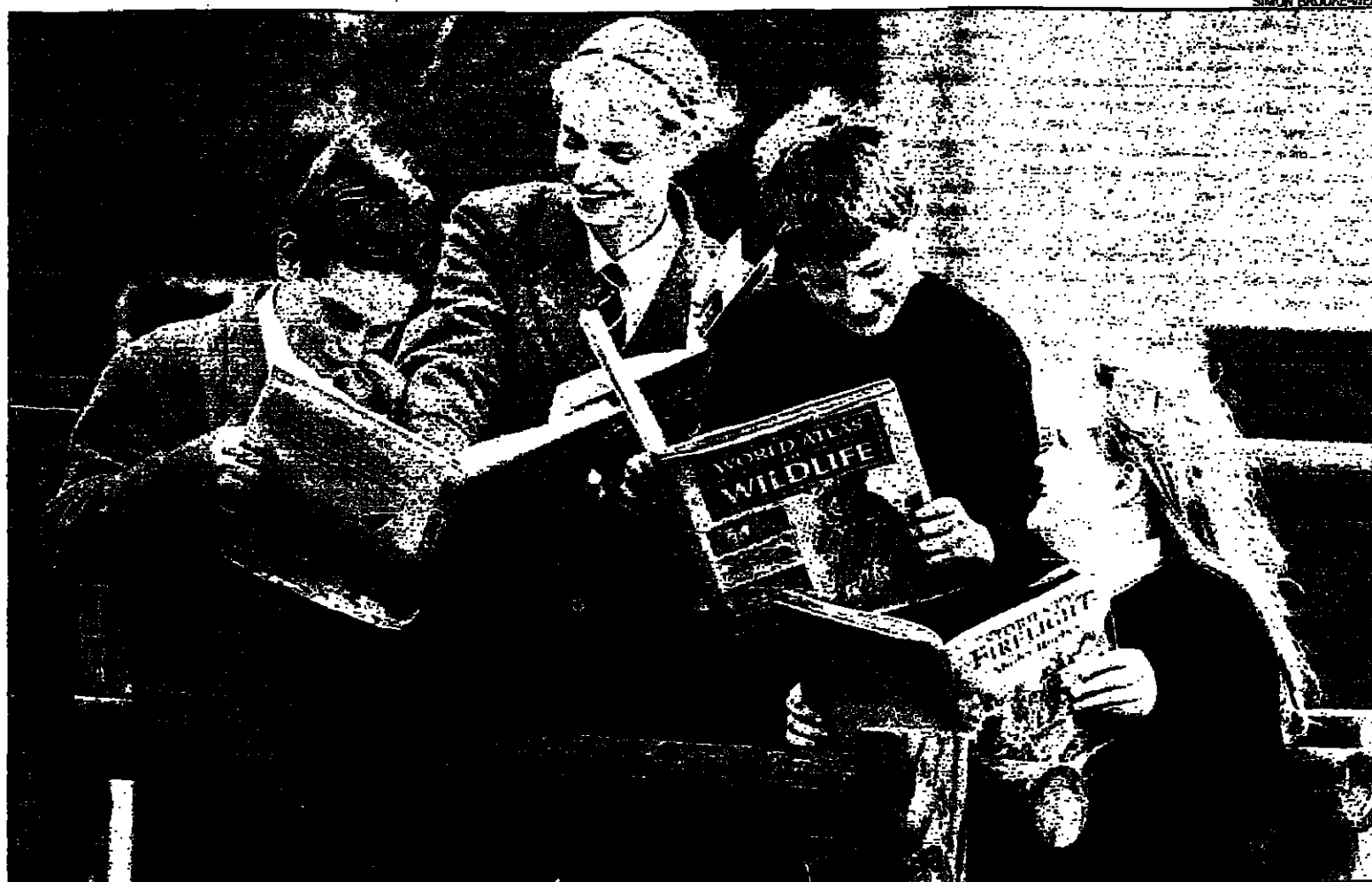
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Reay: says that benefits include fewer pesticides



Helping hand: Neil Adams and Laura Forester of Dean Close School, left, with Daniel Kear and Hannah Lewis of neighbouring Belmont School

Neighbours offer total support

By GEORGE PENDLE

PUPILS at an independent school are saving Free Books for Schools tokens from *The Times* to boost the total of a nearby special school in the scheme.

The book offer has helped to build the relationship between Dean Close School, in Cheltenham, where boarding fees are £4,685 a term, and nearby Belmont School, which has 100 children aged between five and 16 who have learning and emotional difficulties.

Vanessa Aris, head of careers at Dean Close, as well as chairman of governors at Belmont, said: "The link between the two schools started some time ago and it's a link we've fostered. A broom cupboard was cleared out to use as a library at Belmont and when the tokens started, I saw this as our chance to help fill it."

An inter-house competition has been organised at Dean Close to encourage the 440 pupils to collect. They are hoping to amass enough tokens to provide 100 books for Belmont and in return are being offered the chance of work experience in special needs teaching.

Tokens are appearing in *The Times*, *The Sun*, *The Sunday Times*, the *News of the World* and on *Walkers* snacks. The offer helpline number is 0845 6040312 and today's token is on page 26.



Mobile phone campaign fails to conquer world

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE first global mobile phone service, hailed as the ultimate status symbol for the travelling executive, is in trouble after being dogged by technical and commercial problems.

Six months after the last two satellites were launched to complete the £3.5 billion Iridium phone network, not a single handset has been sold in Britain. The service, developed with a great deal of hype and due to be switched on last September has few customers elsewhere.

Only about 20 per cent of the world is covered by conventional mobile phones. Iridium was intended to provide a comprehensive worldwide service via a network of 66 satellites.

but Motorola and Kyocera, the makers of the phones, have not produced enough handsets. The few that have been made have suffered from poor reception and it has often proved impossible to make or maintain calls. Industry experts believe that faults were linked to the software designed to pass the calls between satellites.

One industry source said yesterday that he had been telephoned by someone using a £2,000 Iridium handset and it had been like "talking to a Martian", and that "half the words would lose a syllable".

A spokeswoman for Orange, which is Iridium's partner in Britain, said: "We are still testing the service and as soon as it meets our standards we will offer it. I cannot confirm when."

Lance Stevens, of Orange, added that recent trials had not been encouraging. "The chance of making a successful call was not very high, in fact it was pretty low to be honest. It's not perfect but it is getting close." He said he hoped that the service would be launched in February.

The problems in Britain are being mirrored elsewhere in Europe and it remains to be seen whether the company can survive the delays. Because its satellites are in low orbits, they need to be replaced every five to seven years.



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Private Banking Savings Account (1)			
(Annual interest option)			
Up to £10,000	5.25	5.00	5.00
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£100,000+	5.85	5.60	5.60
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£100,000+	5.73	5.49	5.60

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US denies deal to hand over Stasi spy files

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE United States denied yesterday that it intends to hand over secret files taken from East German police archives after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The German authorities suggested this week that Washington and Bonn were about to pool secret information and thus unleash a comprehensive hunt for spies.

But US officials in Washington and in Bonn now say no such deal has been struck, although German researchers may be allowed to trawl through some of the files held by the CIA.

America and Germany hold two key pieces of the espionage jigsaw puzzle. The solution would unmask every one of the 4,500 East German agents who penetrated Western institutions between 1969 and 1987.

The CIA acquired in 1989 what are dubbed as the "crown jewels" of the Stasi's espionage wing (known as the HVA): that is, the true identities, pay and codenames of each agent.

The Germans, on the other hand, have just cracked the code of four magnetic tapes recovered from HVA headquarters. They thus know precisely — 180,564 reports are on record — what information was discovered by Communist agents. If the two sources of

information are put together — and the Germans are saying they fit like lock and key — it will be clear how deeply the East Germans (and thus Moscow) penetrated the West.

For the United States this should be of particular interest because the decoded German archives give details of operations in North America. The German side was so sure of the value of this information that it leaked plans for a trade with Washington.

Sandy Berger, National Security adviser to the Clinton Administration, was going to hand over a caseload of micro-

films next month, the German authorities said.

The Clinton Administration now denies this, repeating its long-standing reluctance to surrender its HVA files. The reason seems to be that previously unknown American networks and double agents would be exposed.

Certainly, the pooling of the United States and German data would unravel some of the great Cold War mysteries. For example, it might be possible to work out the scope of East German infiltration of the Vatican. Since the killing of the Swiss Guard commander last year, there has been speculation as to the Communist network in the Vatican state.

Some old secrets, not critical for national security but politically embarrassing, are said to be tucked away in the German files. These include contacts between a Stasi agent and the Labour Party in the early 1980s and with social democratic parties throughout Europe.

The German tapes, known as Sira (System, Information and Research), have been held by the Berlin Agency which stores and processes all the East German secret police archives. Two computer technicians broke the code shortly before Christmas.

Nuclear film leads to trial

Moscow: In a case that highlights the durability of communist ideas of free speech, a journalist and a naval captain go on trial today in Vladivostok accused of spying (Alice Lagnado writes). Grigori Pasko is accused of spying for Japan after film he shot of a Russian naval tanker dumping nuclear waste was shown on Japanese television. Captain Aleksandr Nikitin's crime was to publish information on nuclear waste.



Gert Postel, who was appearing at a Leipzig court yesterday charged with fraud

Glib liar dupes Germany's medical elite

'Well-respected psychiatrist' faces year in jail, writes Roger Boyes

A POSTMAN dubbed the biggest German liar since Baron Münchhausen was sent for trial in Leipzig yesterday accused of posing as a senior doctor for more than six months.

Gert Postel's other jobs — acquired by the diligent forging of documents and bluff — included judge, prosecuting lawyer and theologian, but it was impersonation of a top psychiatrist that has put him in the dock.

Postel, 40, was an expert psychiatric witness at 30 trials. Saxony's judicial system says his evidence did not lead to any miscarriages of justice, but, inevitably, there will be appeals. That is only a small measure of the embarrassment felt by institutions that were comprehensively duped. The fault, say many, lies in a society that puts too much emphasis on documentation and an authoritative manner.

Postel's career began in 1979. A school dropout, he faked a leaving certificate and became a legal clerk. Eventually the forgery was discovered and he lost the job, but he became the lover of two women doctors and picked up enough knowledge to bluff his way as a clinical psychologist.

"If you grasp dialectics and the jargon of psychiatry you can put any old nonsense into a convincing form," he said later. At a rehabilitation centre, he was so plausible that he was allowed to stand in for the

supervising doctor. He was rumbled by a patient, a judge who knew him from his brief legal career. But while on bail he was, under a pseudonym, made responsible for all referrals to psychiatric clinics and supervision of social psychiatric services in the city of Flensburg. He reduced the art of psychiatric referral to two formulae. If the patient was shy, sleepy or reluctant to speak, he was having a "lightly autistic psychosis". More lively ones were suffering from "active psychosis of a schizophrenic nature".

Found out after he lost a wallet containing two identical photographs in different names, Postel received a year's suspended sentence. But the lure of medicine was too strong and in 1996 he became chief neurologist and psychiatrist at a big regional hospital near Colditz.

He built up such a reputation that he was tipped for a chair in neurology. But the game was up. Shielded by former lovers, he evaded the police until late last year. He has admitted deception and faces a year in jail.

Critics silenced as Lafontaine budget makes priority of good housekeeping

Bonn: Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister, yesterday capped a month of skimping and saving by unveiling a budget that surprised political observers and the markets with its commitment to good housekeeping rather than ambitious tax-and-spend job creation schemes (Roger Boyes writes).

"The budget demonstrates that Oskar is capable of learning new

tricks," said a senior European diplomat, pointing out that Herr Lafontaine had already retreated from several other of his controversial post-election promises. He no longer talks of "target exchange rate zones" in the global economy. European tax harmonisation is now called tax co-ordination and his pledge to stimulate growth by boosting private consumption barely fig-

ures in the latest budgetary calculations. Indeed the new Government's first budget closely resembles the earlier calculations of the outgoing Christian Democratic Government.

There are big increases for the health service, recognising that it will now take over responsibility for looking after old people, and in the employment department,

which needs to finance promised early retirement pensions. The Defence Ministry has been forced to trim 7.5 per cent from its budget — regarded as difficult but not endangering key co-operation projects with Britain or Germany's commitment to the Eurofighter project. The Finance Ministry, meanwhile, is having to borrow new money to make the books balance.

If the budget — approved by the Cabinet yesterday — stays on course, Germany will keep well within the monetary union target of borrowing no more than 3 per cent of gross domestic product. Herr Lafontaine's big hope is for significant privatisation over the next three years — German Post, the German Post Bank, Deutsche Telekom and three airports are to be privatised.

The calculations of Herr Lafontaine may still go awry. A Supreme Court decision on Tuesday ruled that all families with children should be given tax breaks similar to those presently given to single mothers. Giving single mothers privileged tax status was in conflict with the Constitution, ruled the court, since all mothers should be treated equally. The Bill for these

new tax breaks will not arrive until the next budget year but will be in the region of 88 billion.

It may be too early to judge Herr Lafontaine on the basis of one budget, but it seems that he is more concerned with balancing the books and fiscal discipline than with the tax-and-spend policies usually associated with a man branded as a dyed-in-the-wool socialist.

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CHEVROLET

Monitors deny Racak evidence was fabricated

INTERNATIONAL monitors from the beleaguered Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe mission in Kosovo yesterday rejected as propaganda reports from Belgrade — boosted by speculation in French newspapers — that the Racak massacre of ethnic Albanians was a set-up.

Le Figaro and *Le Monde* have suggested that between Friday night and Saturday morning, when the international furor over Racak began, the Kosovo Liberation Army could have fabricated evidence, and even mutilated some of the bodies themselves.

The reports point out that OSCE monitors were invited to observe the operation, and that they were in Racak on Friday evening, after the police had pulled back from the village, and appeared to report nothing untoward. They also state that a television team from Associated Press filmed part of the police operation, and little of the evidence from its footage chimed with Albanian accounts of the killings.

At the same time the Serbian state media is giving prominent coverage to the initial reports of Dr Sasa Dobricin, the Pristina state pathologist, who has said that none of the 40 bodies retrieved from Racak on Monday "bears any sign of execution. The bodies were not massacred."

The backlash is helping Belgrade to substantiate its case against intervention and to justify its expulsion of William Walker, the OSCE Ambassador, who technically has to leave Yugoslavia as *persona non grata* by tonight.

But in Pristina OSCE officials yesterday were standing their ground, and an expert



Tom Walker reports from Pristina on reaction to French reports that the massacre was staged by the Albanian side

gave the first detailed briefing containing compelling evidence that Racak was indeed a massacre in which many victims were killed — either shot or bludgeoned — at close range. Speaking on condition of strict anonymity, the source did admit, however, that some bodies may have been moved, and that one may have been decapitated and another had an additional gunshot wound inflicted after death.

The OSCE examination, carried out on Saturday afternoon, found that two bodies had bullet wounds to the head bearing powder marks confirming a close-range execution-style killing. Bloodstains indicated they had not been moved. One elderly man had been decapitated, although whether this occurred before or after his death was impossible to judge.

A group of 15 victims was inspected in a ditch at the top of the hill overlooking Racak. "Some of them had been moved there. I can't say why," said the expert. Most had bullet wounds to the head, all inflicted while they were alive, except for one man, who had been shot in the left chest "after death, but it can't be proven how long".

"I think we can say this was a very nasty massacre," said the source, who also dismissed Serb claims that the bodies had been stripped of KLA uniforms. "There was complete

agreement between the holes in the clothes and the bodies."

Le Figaro had hypothesised that at Racak the KLA attempted to transform a military defeat into a political victory.

London: The Foreign Office announced yesterday that the Contact Group meeting on Kosovo would now be held in London, instead of Brussels, and would map out a new strategy (Michael Binyon writes). This could be followed by a meeting of Western foreign ministers next week. The Nato Council will meet again today, and readiness for action has been reduced from 96 to 48 hours.



Two sisters, aged 3 and 6, wait to be evacuated by Western aid agencies after their home in the village of Petrovo was shelled by Serb forces



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Jumbled prosecution of President 'based on myth, not reality'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON

MAKING an impassioned counter-attack, President Clinton's lawyers claimed yesterday that the prosecution had unfairly jumbled evidence from the year-long saga, creating an "enormously damaging" image "based on myth, not reality". Gregory Craig, White

House special counsel, opened the second day of the President's defence before the Senate with a fierce attack on the charge that the President committed perjury about his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

He told senators that he had come "to tell you how really bad this article is, legally, structurally and constitutionally". And he

asked them to take the time to read Mr Clinton's grand jury evidence and "see the President is truthful". Mr Craig, whose energetic, crisp delivery has made him a star even within Mr Clinton's 11-strong, all-star legal team, accused the prosecution of deliberately capitalising on the confusion of a public befuddled and half-drowned by the thousands of pages of evi-

dence. In particular, the prosecution had deliberately blurred the stark difference between the President's evidence in the Paula Jones sexual harassment civil case last January, and his evidence to the Grand Jury in August.

In the Jones evidence, the President was "evasive and misleading", Mr Craig said. "Indeed, as I have already said, he was madden-

ing", he added. "But in the Grand Jury, for four long hours, he was forthright and he told the whole truth." The President "did not deny a relationship with Ms Lewinsky; he acknowledged one. He did not deny that he had been alone with her; he admitted that he was, on many occasions, alone with her."

This confusion has given rise to a wholly inaccurate conventional wisdom," Mr Craig said. "It has done enormous damage to the President."

Mr Craig touched on the point that is crucial for the President's case, but politically dangerous: whether Ms Lewinsky's account can be trusted. The White House has gone to great lengths to avoid calling her unreliable, deluded or a liar. But it would be disastrous if the President could be removed from office simply on a "he said, she said" dispute, without corroborating evidence, White House lawyers said.

Before the defence had resumed, senators held separate party meetings and Republicans emerged sounding more sure that they will seek to call at least some witnesses to resolve conflicts in evidence.

SUSAN WALSH/AP

Congress gasps at Clinton's big spending plans

PRESIDENT Clinton has ensured that bitter fights lie ahead by challenging Republicans to forgo tax cuts in favour of bolstering government pensions and healthcare security for a greying America.

His ambitious State of the Union address, with an agenda that was his defiant answer to charges of impeachment, contained proposals that would expand the reach of government on a scale not seen since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society in the 1960s.

They were only proposals, and Republicans controlling Congress have the power to knock them back. However, they must come up with answers of their own or run the risk of suffering a further decline in voters' affections.

Republicans were rattled yesterday that Mr Clinton had found ways to spend the entire budget surplus projected for the next 15 years, an astounding \$4,400 billion (£2,700 billion).

"Not a penny for tax cuts?" asked an exasperated Dick Armey, leader of the House Republicans. Other Republicans took the same line, that they had not worked towards a budget surplus simply to spend it all on new programmes. Instead, they will try to enact a rapid 10 per cent cut in income tax, claiming that families already pay 40 cents on every dollar they earn in taxes, the highest percentage ever.

Will Mr Clinton veto a tax cut? It could cause unease among his fellow Democrats who, unlike him, will be

President tackles health reforms with \$4,400bn budget, writes Ian Brodie

running for re-election in just under two years.

A more likely outcome is a compromise — help for pensions but also tax cuts — that will be reached only after prolonged and difficult budget negotiations later this year.

Republicans bridled at Mr Clinton's plans for the Government to get involved in stock market investments and in managing new retirement accounts for all Americans.

"People today want and expect to have control over their own lives and money," said Jennifer Dunn, a Congresswoman who gave the official Republican response to Mr Clinton's speech.

Mr Clinton proposed the most far-reaching reform yet advocated for Social Security, the government pension scheme that is facing insolvency in 2032. He laid out a plan to transfer nearly two-thirds of the projected surplus to Social Security and to allow the system, which must now buy rock-solid Treasury bonds, to invest nearly a quarter of the new funds on Wall Street through an independent board.

Republicans reacted with horror, saying that the idea

could have the effect of "nationalising" the Fortune 500 companies and of creating the potential for huge conflicts of interest between the Government and the private sector.

Another potential problem, only whispered, was: what if the stock market crashes?

Under Mr Clinton's plan, another 11 per cent of the budget surplus, about \$500 billion, would be used to match investments by individual workers in retirement accounts, a pension system already offered by many employers but not the Government. Again, there were serious Republican misgivings about giving Washington more control over retirement income.

Another Clinton proposal would use 15 per cent of the surplus to ensure solvency for Medicare, the health service for "senior citizens". Its prospects will depend on whatever compromise Republicans can strike with Mr Clinton over tax cuts and Social Security.

In the wake of Mr Clinton's speech, Washington was left to wonder at his ability to "compartmentalise". Despite his impeachment trial, and the stain it will leave on his legacy whatever the outcome, the President delivered his televised address as though there was nothing else bothering him.

Yesterday he took his message on the road to Buffalo and Pennsylvania for campaign-style events to promote his agenda as if it were a sure-fire winner.

Bronwen Maddox, page 22



President Clinton and his wife Hillary boarding a plane at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, yesterday to start campaigning for his agenda

Beijing sends Internet 'subversive' to jail

FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN BEIJING

CHINA yesterday jailed a software engineer, known by the codename "Black Eyes", for two years for subversion on the Internet. He is accused of sending thousands of e-mail addresses to a dissident publication in America.

The case was the first known instance of a Chinese

court challenging Internet use as a threat to state security, observers said.

While some overseas human rights officials felt that the sentence was less harsh than was expected, it was condemned by the wife of Lin Hai, the 30-year-old engineer. "It is heavier than I had hoped," said Xu Hong, who was allowed to attend the hearing at a court in Shanghai.

"When he is innocent, even one year is too long."

Lin was arrested last March and accused of trying to undermine state power by using the Internet to send about 30,000 e-mail addresses to VIP Reference, a dissident publication. Lin told the court that he had supplied them under a business arrangement and that he regularly bought or exchanged information to

build up a database for an online job-search business.

Diplomats here said the case had broad implications for state control over the Internet. Beijing sees the Internet as opening up opportunities, but it also keeps careful watch on what it believes could pose a threat to its power. China routinely blocks sites of major news groups and scans the Internet for subversive material.



Lin Hai: supplied e-mail addresses

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CHANGING TIMES

Israeli poll hit by new break-in

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

FOR THE second time in a week, burglars have broken into the headquarters of an American polling firm working for the Israeli opposition Labour Party and taken "sensitive" material. To the embarrassment of Washington police and the FBI, again there are no immediate suspects for the break-in at Capitol Hill.

The two episodes have injected a capricious element into the tense run-up to the Israeli general election in May. Not least of the issues raised is why Israeli political parties are turning to Americans for help in winning votes.

The premises of Greenberg Quinlan Research on Capitol Hill were broken into on Monday evening by thieves who got in through a first-floor window and immediately disabled a new and supposedly superior burglar alarm. It had been installed after the first break-in the previous Monday when the burglars entered through a skylight and disconnected a security alarm.

In the first raid, the intruders made off with a laptop computer containing information on the Labour Party's bank accounts and assets, its campaign strategy and a schedule

of forthcoming appearances by Ehud Barak, the leader and main rival to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, and his right-wing Likud Party.

In the second raid, the haul included questionnaires, surveys and strategies giving details of how Mr Barak will mount his challenge.

The first break-in generated news and comment about an Israeli Watergate, based on the break-in at Democratic Party headquarters in Washington in 1972 by burglars working for Richard Nixon's Committee to Re-elect the President - Creep. The first Watergate break-in went undetected, but the burglars were caught on returning to replace eavesdropping microphones that were not working properly.

Aides to Mr Barak, though suspicious, were reluctant to assign any blame after the first break-in. That reticence has now been discarded. "We hereby declare the demise of the coincidence theory," Alon Pinkas, an adviser, said.

In Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu said yesterday the burglaries may have been set up to embarrass him: "We witness, suddenly, a second break-in. The first was absurd, but the

second, in the same place, occurred while the FBI was watching. I hope we are not dealing with political provocations whose intent is to create false accusations."

Mr Barak, a much-decorated retired army general, said he was not worried that the stolen material could damage him. In his view, the failing Likud Government could not somehow improve its standing by reading purloined documents and files.

Nevertheless, somebody is embarked on a serious effort to harass the Barak campaign. The homes of at least six of his staff have been broken into in the past four months, although in each case nothing was stolen.

The firm targeted in Washington is run by Stanley Greenberg, a key Democratic pollster, who specialises in strategic research, focus groups and intensive one-on-one surveys. He has advised a broad range of campaigns including those of President Clinton, Tony Blair and President Mandela.

Mr Netanyahu must tread warily in making any criticism. He has his own American political adviser, the conservative Arthur Finkelstein.



Joe Gentile, a police spokesman, briefs reporters at the offices of a US political adviser to Israel's Labour Party

India renounces nuclear testing

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

INDIA yesterday promised Britain that it will never again test a nuclear weapon.

The pledge was made to Derek Fatchett, a Foreign Office Minister, by Brajesh Mishra, the national security adviser to Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Indian Prime Minister. Mr Mishra, charged with negotiating nuclear issues in the wake of India's testing of nuclear devices last summer, said that Delhi would not explode any new device before signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), automatically barring it from further tests.

Mr Mishra was also due to see George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, and the Prime Minister's foreign affairs adviser at Downing Street.

Britain refused to cut off aid to India after the tests, and led a diplomatic push to persuade it to sign the CTBT.

India will unveil all its missiles at its annual Republic Day parade next week, according to the parade commander.



The King and Prince Hamzah, the new favourite

King Hussein raises doubt over successor

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN AMMAN

FRESH questions about the future of Jordan were raised yesterday when King Hussein broke with past practice and refused to confirm his young brother, Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, 51, as his automatic successor.

In his first interview since returning to a hero's welcome on Tuesday from a successful six-month cancer treatment in America, the Harrow-educated monarch, 63, refused to tell Cable News Network whether he was planning to revise the 1965 constitutional change that named Prince Hassan as the next king.

The King looked uncomfortable when pinned down on the question of the succession. "I am not prepared to say anything," he said. "So please do not commit me to anything whatsoever. I have always had to take the final decision. It is my responsibility, and I will come to it at an appropriate time."

The tone of the interview, combined with the fact that at the airport the King referred to his brother as his "deputy" and not by his title Crown Prince, increased speculation that he plans to name Prince Hamzah, 18, his eldest son by his fourth wife, Queen Noor, as his successor.

The Prince is following his father's footsteps at Sand-

hurst, having spent much of the past six months at the King's bedside at the Mayo Clinic, Minnesota. He was singled out for mention by the King from his other children at the airport arrival ceremony because of the blood he provided for transfusions during the treatment.

Royal watchers also took note that during Tuesday's 15-mile drive through the crowded streets of Amman, Queen Noor rode next to her husband, in contrast to his 1992 homecoming from an earlier treatment, when he was accompanied by Crown Prince Hassan.

Speaking in his palace overlooking the capital, the King said that he had made Hassan the Crown Prince with the agreement of their other brother, Prince Muhammad, because there was no alternative at the time.

In 1965, the King had been subject to assassination attempts and his natural successor, his first son, Abdullah, was then aged three.

"It was I who canvassed for the alternative in our constitution that enables a brother to take over," the King said yesterday. "But that did not mean at all it was the end of the story there, and I think the Crown Prince has to work in the background to a very large extent."

Queen in 'honour killings' campaign

Amman: Queen Noor of Jordan has backed a campaign to fight "honour killings", the former taboo subject of the murders of women in the Arab world for alleged sexual impropriety that claim hundreds of lives every year (Christopher Walker writes).

In Jordan alone, a country of only 4.6 million people, at least 25 to 30 women are killed annually because of alleged immorality. That represents a quarter of all murders in the country. Male relations, encouraged by lax laws that can enable them to escape with little or no penalty, take the lives of these women because of their involvement - or simply suspected involvement - in affairs.

The Queen joined the cam-



Queen Noor: tackling a taboo in the Arab world

ampaign spearheaded by Rana Hussein, an Arab woman crime reporter who for the past five years has been exposing honour killings in the daily Jordan Times.

The Queen told CNN: "This type of violence against women is not consistent with Islam or with the Jordanian constitution." She said she had "very strong personal feelings as a woman, as a wife and as a mother about this form of violence".



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Freetown refugees cheer return of Penfold

FROM SAM KILEY IN FREETOWN

PETER PENFOLD, Britain's High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, returned yesterday to Freetown to a tumultuous welcome by refugees from the fighting between rebels and West African Ecomog forces. Mr Penfold, awarded Sierra Leone's highest honour last year for bravery during the rebel junta's 1997 takeover, waved and smiled as the crowds cheered him during his tour of the refugee camp in the capital's stadium. He was protected by bodyguards and a Royal Marines detachment. After meeting President Kabbah, he braved the dangerous streets, where residents and Ecomog troops fear rebel snipers, to assess the capital's humanitarian needs. Viewed as something of a maverick in London, the paramilitary chief, as he is known here, greeted crowds that chanted "we want peace, we want peace", then "we want food, we want food". Talking of the destruction wreaked by rebels as they fled the city, he said: "A hurricane has come to Freetown. I used to be based in the Caribbean where hurri-

cane would often strike. This hurricane was man-made." He added that his visit, from Conakry in neighbouring Guinea, was to show support for the democratically elected Government and for the Ecomog forces, who yesterday continued to advance on the rebels. Mr Penfold, who was evacuated to Guinea soon after rebels infiltrated Freetown in an orgy of violence, said that he was in contact with Western aid agencies that were very anxious to obtain more information. "What is important is to deliver humanitarian support that is properly delivered and sustained," he said in the stadium, home to 30,000 to 40,000 people. He then returned to HMS Norfolk, the frigate carrying out a reconnaissance of the situation in Sierra Leone. Officials have ruled out any direct combat role for British troops, but have "noted" appeals from the Government and Ecomog generals for logistical help. "Decisions about what limited military aid can be given are being taken in London," said Mr Penfold, who was at the centre of last



Peter Penfold tours Freetown yesterday and, below, when he appeared before the Legg "arms-to-Africa" inquiry

year's arms-to-Africa scandal when a London-based mercenary company claimed that it had received Foreign Office approval to arm Sierra Leone's Government, then in exile. Sir Thomas Legg's subsequent inquiry into the Sandline affair was critical of Mr Penfold's role, but said that he had had to operate without guidance from London. However, investigations by The Times have disclosed that Mr Penfold and other British officials were able to use German embassy equipment to keep London informed about discussions with Sandline. The Foreign Office has denied this.

Letters, page 23



Briton's cry for help

A BRITISH citizen trapped behind rebel lines during two weeks of fierce fighting in Sierra Leone issued a desperate appeal for help yesterday after being left destitute by marauding killers who fled the charred capital (writes Sam Kiley). Olu Okulate, who was born and brought up in Chelsea, west London, yesterday sent a note to The Times in Freetown saying: "I have been trapped behind rebel lines for most of this year and our lives are in danger." He came to Freetown in November last year to marry Yegbe, a Sierra Leonean citizen, and said in his note that he had been unable to leave the capital as planned last December because his wife did not have an entry visa for Britain. "Our money is gone and I am trapped in Freetown. I am desperate for assistance for my wife and I beg you in Jesus' name to help us," he wrote. "I do not know what do. This has been the worst two weeks of my life," Mr Okulate added.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Yeltsin ulcer will not need surgery

Moscow: Doctors at the Central Clinical Hospital here have decided that President Yeltsin's bleeding ulcer can be treated without surgery (Anna Blundy writes). That will come as a relief to the sickly President who underwent a quintuple heart bypass in 1996. He was taken to hospital on Sunday less than two months after suffering pneumonia. Sergei Mironov, his chief doctor, said that Mr Yeltsin would be in hospital for up to three weeks and would not be able to travel for three months. Independent estimates suggest that he could be in hospital for six weeks. Grigori Yavlinsky, leader of the Yabloko party and a potential presidential contender, told television that Mr Yeltsin's continuing illness was destabilising the country; he called him "a power addict".

Restaurant fire arrests

Paris: Three men have been arrested on suspicion of starting the fire at a two-star restaurant that killed Jean Schillinger, the celebrated chef and owner and sent shockwaves through the French culinary world in 1995 (Ben Macintyre writes). The allegedly set fire to the famed restaurant in Colmar, Alsace, because it was "a symbol of the bourgeoisie" according to news reports. The three are said to have confessed to starting the fire while drunk.

Royal imposter held

Tokyo: A 59-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of defrauding an acquaintance of 10 million yen (£53,000) by claiming to be the illegitimate child of the late Emperor Hirohito, the Kyodo news agency reported. Akiko Ikeda allegedly convinced a woman to lend her the money in 1992, saying she wanted to donate it to a university and would pay it back after collecting a large inheritance, which she expected shortly. Ms Ikeda has denied the charges. (AP)

Gershwin's sister dies

New York: Frances Godowsky, who tried out songs for her brothers, George and Ira Gershwin, before emerging as a respected painter, has died, aged 92. Known as Frankie Gershwin, she was the last of the Gershwin siblings and the youngest behind Ira, George and Arthur. Mrs Godowsky sang in a few Broadway shows in the 1920s and was often the first to sing Gershwin tunes, giving them a test run in George's upper Manhattan apartment. (AP)

'Prophet' faces death

Lahore: A Pakistani has been arrested for claiming he was a prophet sent by God to reform society, and could be charged under a blasphemy law making such offences punishable by death. Muhammad Mahmood Ahmed made the declaration at the Badshahi mosque during prayers at the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of Ramadan. Pakistan enforced extensive security for Eid in the wake of recent terrorist incidents, including the massacre of 17 worshippers at a mosque. (AFP)

Pig might not fly

Paw Paw, Michigan: Airlines are refusing to sell a ticket to Pork Chop, the star performer in Debbie and Alicia Dacoba's ventriloquism act, to travel cabin class. The Dacobas fear she may not be safe in the hold. Only small dogs and cats in carry cases can fly with passengers. The decision could keep the Viennamese potbellied pig from bringing home the bacon since it jeopardises a week-long engagement in Las Vegas. (AP)

Fugitive 'Robin Hood' of townships held over 14 killings

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

POLICE in South Africa were patting themselves on the back yesterday after a rare success. Collin Chauke, one of the country's most wanted fugitives, a former guerrilla believed to be the mastermind behind a series of murderous highway

robberies, is back behind bars. The main concern for the police will be to keep him there. Chauke stroled to freedom, possibly with inside help, through the main gates of Pretoria Central Prison on five other men in December 1997. He was being held in connection with 13 armed robberies that resulted in the murders of 14 security

guards and is suspected of being involved in other robberies, carried out with military precision by gangs of up to 50 men armed with automatic weapons, since his escape. Chauke, a former member of the African National Congress's former armed wing, Umkonto we Sizwe, was arrested in Nelspruit in Mpumalanga province. George Fivaz, the Po-

lice Commissioner, said yesterday that Chauke was arrested at a town house complex, apparently his latest hideout, with two other men and a woman. He confirmed that the arrest came after a tip-off and that four people might share a reward of £35,000. In black townships around Johannesburg, Chauke has become some-

thing of a Robin Hood figure, handing out cash to the poor while leading a flamboyant life. He was spotted at a birthday party for Peter Mokheba, the former ANC youth wing leader and now a deputy minister, but slipped away before police arrived. He is being held in a small cell and being watched day and night.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

RAP VISIONARY



Warren Beatty is still driven by a liberal idealism. As a senator turned rap artist in his new movie *Bulworth*, he plays for laughs to make serious points on puritanism and politics. Interview, Culture, this Sunday

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Pregnancy without an itch



Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on skin irritation during pregnancy; artificial sun tans and skin disease; the difference between perforated and bleeding ulcers; the medicinal value of plant extracts; and Hitler's singular problem

Research into excessive skin irritation, one of the miseries of pregnancy, which is now thought more dangerous to the baby than hitherto believed, is to be undertaken at St Thomas' Hospital in London. It will be funded by Tommy's Campaign.

In a good Victorian novel the affluent woman before childbirth became happier and happier as the day of her confinement grew closer. Now only the very rich have much in the way of domestic help, and women in the later stages of pregnancy are all too often tired and weary. They have indigestion, feel heavy and breathless, and long for deliverance. Life is difficult enough during the last few weeks of pregnancy, but it can become wretched for 2 per cent of women who are driven to distraction by an overwhelming desire to scratch.

Some skin irritation, bearable but still a nuisance, affects as many as one in five women, although otherwise the pregnancy is normal in every other way. Neither the severe form of irritation, affecting one in 50, or the more common, lesser variety shows any evidence of a rash. The irritation is classically worse at night and, for

the badly affected, sleep is all but impossible. Next day, inadequately rested, the woman finds that the inevitable household tasks are an unbearable burden and often becomes cross and tearful.

It is thought that the group who have this excessive irritation are suffering from obstetric cholestasis. The condition may also be characterised by more serious problems such as premature labour, and troubles with the new-born baby that may be adversely affected by delivery even to the point of foetal death. The condition is becoming increasingly recognised, and the more this is so, the more cases are diagnosed.

Obstetric cholestasis is not well understood, although skin irritation is frequently found in cases of liver disease. A recent analysis of blood taken from women who had had an unexplained stillbirth showed that in more than 45 per cent there was evidence of abnormal liver function and raised bile acids. In Britain every year there are 2,000 unexplained stillbirths, which means that 100 babies every year are perhaps lost from this cause.

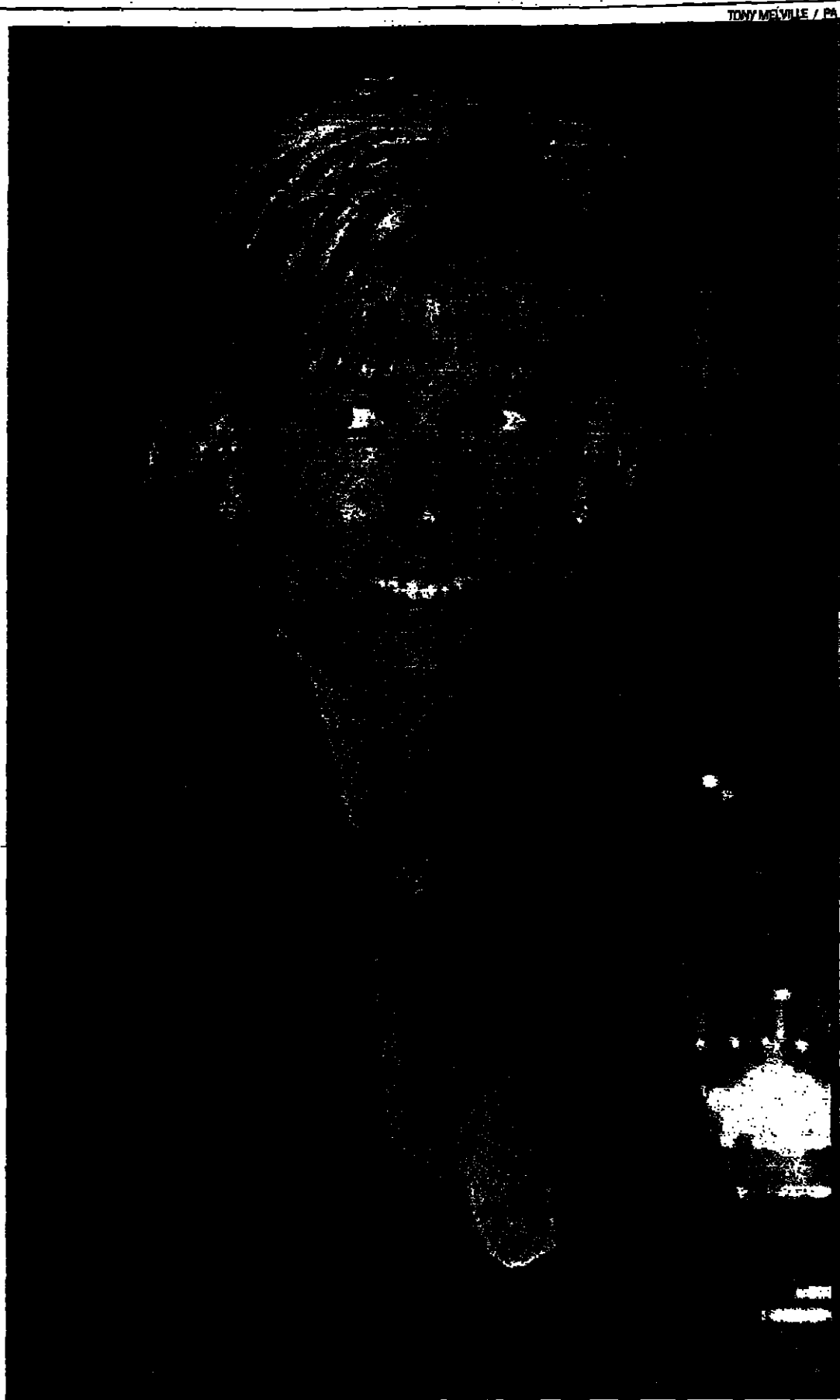
There is a familial pattern to the development of obstetric cholestasis, possibly in some

families women are particularly susceptible to the effects of oestrogens which rise in pregnancy. Likewise some women may suffer from cholestatic-type symptoms, including skin irritation when taking the Pill, or even at the time of menstruation. HRT may also induce severe irritation in those people who have had obstetric cholestasis in their youth. Although there is greater awareness of the condition than there was, it is still poorly understood.

Tommy's Campaign, a national pregnancy research charity, has become one of the most important sources of research and information in Britain on three subjects: miscarriages, premature births and stillbirths. Obstetric cholestasis therefore fits very well into its programme and its researchers will be able to make good use of existing expertise.

Tommy's Campaign, with its own Professor of Foetal Health, operates from St Thomas', and in the eight years it has existed has funded 40 research projects nationwide.

● Tommy's Campaign, 1 Kensington Road, London, SE1 7RR (0171-620 0188).



Sophie Rhys-Jones: does she take after dark-skinned Celts from Wales or fair-skinned ones from Ireland?

Edward's golden girl should be careful of tanning

SOPHIE RHYS-JONES is a Celt. Her father's family, originally from Wales, has been in London for generations, but her mother's, until recently, lived in Ireland. When Miss Rhys-Jones undresses before sliding into her curtained sun canopy at the Hammersmith Tanning Shop, she should pause and consider whether her skin type takes more after the dark-skinned Celts from Wales or the fair-skinned (Type 1 or 2) Celts from Ireland. The effect on the health of her skin of the artificial ultraviolet radiation may depend on this.

Everybody understands why Miss Rhys-Jones wants to remain tanned throughout the winter. British Caucasians, brought up to admire a healthy brown complexion, don't feel at their best when their pallid skins look as though they have been lurking indoors all winter. Miss Rhys-Jones is in public relations, so her appearance matters. She will now be on view not only to her clients, but to the world as well.

It is also understandable that the short-term gains of a tan now seem so desirable that the long-term effects of it on the skin may be ignored. It is assumed that this is a marriage which is going to last, and that we have a monarchy that will survive still being stared at in 50 years time. What effect will the rays absorbed in the sun canopy have on her skin when she opens the new rocket station at Heathrow in 2049?

Professor Ronald Marks of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Wales has written a book, *Sun and the Skin*, published by Martin Dunitz. It is an excellent study that wouldn't make very encouraging bedtime reading for Miss Rhys-Jones. He describes the habit as "at best wasteful and at worst hazardous", but says that those who insist on using tanning centres should follow a few golden rules if they wish to be baked golden brown — always wear goggles, always match the exposure to your skin's reaction (ie. are you a pale-skinned Celt with fair or light auburn hair? If you are, be particularly careful; don't wear any cosmetics or scent before a session; and don't have more than 20 to 30 sessions in any one year. You should, of course, go to a reputable tanning centre where the apparatus is likely to work efficiently. Naturally, you shouldn't have a pre-existing skin disease that might be exacerbated.

The danger of excessive tanning, even in the centres, is that it increases the chances of developing many pre-malignant conditions and all three common types of skin cancer: rodent ulcers (basal cell carcinoma), epitheliomas and the malignant moles — melanoma. An invariable effect is that it increases the speed at which the skin ages, multiplies wrinkles and creases, including the crow's feet around the eyes and mouth and the criss-cross lines on the back of the neck. By reducing elasticity, it causes the facial contours to sag.

President Yeltsin and that troublesome ulcer

BORIS YELTSIN'S ulcer has had an unexpected beneficial effect. It has drawn attention to the difference between a perforated ulcer and a bleeding ulcer. The two terms were used by commentators on the first day of his illness. I was alarmed when I awoke to hear an early morning news programme in which there was talk of complications of the President's perforated ulcer.

Had I written in *The Times* about the wrong condition? All was well. President Yeltsin was indeed suffering from a bleeding ulcer; tricky, even dangerous, particularly if he had been taking aspirin as an anticoagulant or if he had allowed any

other anticoagulant therapy for his heart condition to get out of hand. However, if Mr Yeltsin, with his precarious health, had a perforated ulcer, it is more likely that the obituary writers would have been called in from home.

Acute perforation requires immediate surgery; delay lessens the chance of a good recovery. With a very decrepit patient, or if a non-surgical doctor was caught out while trekking through the jungle, it might be worthwhile trying to install some form of continuous suction so that the gastro-intestinal contents are extracted rather than being allowed to drip into the peritoneum to cause fatal

peritonitis. If this procedure is to have any chance of success, it has to be accompanied by large doses of antibiotics and intravenous fluids.

Mr Yeltsin has not been taken into the operating theatre, so it seems that his ulcer must have stopped bleeding. If bleeding continues, or if it recurs, which is always a possibility, there are two options that might be performed. The President could have had an endoscopic examination, accompanied by either electrocautery, laser therapy or local injections, to sclerose the bleeding blood vessels. More often, simple surgery is resorted to and the bleeding staunches.

THE study by scientists of the medicinal qualities of plant extracts has reached new heights. The lily family, for instance, bewitches the eye and fills a room with a seductive scent — paradoxical attributes for the flowers that are classically the symbol of chastity.

However, the lily family is not all it appears. The truth is that they contain more than 20 powerful alkaloids, physiologically active organic compounds found in plants.

Many of these alkaloids have therapeutic value, although they are dangerous if

Magical qualities of a lily can keep you in the pink

taken to excess. Others would make chastity a necessity, but this is much more likely to be a problem for sheep than humans.

If an unwary ewe eats the seeds of wild lilies, a strange teratogenic effect occurs and the luckless ewe's lambs can be born with one central eye — a pastoral Cyclops.

Dr Arthur Hollman, an award-winning medical historian and formerly a consultant

cardiologist at University College Hospital, has for years studied the effects of plants in medicine in general, and in cardiology in particular.

In one of his books, *Plants in Cardiology*, there is an account of the veratrum alkaloids, derived from the veratrum species (*Lilaceae*).

For more than 100 years, veratrum was effectively used to treat high blood pressure but its side-effects, if not as

dramatic as in the ewe, caused nausea and vomiting.

Even when I started in medicine it was still used with success to treat eclampsia, the dangerously high blood pressure of pregnancy.

In the 19th century, before Prozac, now celebrating its tenth birthday, the atypical neuroleptics and a host of tranquillisers, veratrum was used to treat various psychiatric conditions.

The alkaloids from the liliaceae, family have a major effect on the heart and circulation, and thereby reduce blood pressure.

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To have and have not

WAS Hitler genitally normal? Some years ago *The Times* reviewed a book on Hitler's health in which the wartime jokes about his anatomy were discounted. Now Oxford University Press is to publish an authoritative book on his medical problems.

Judging from the pre-publication reviews, most of the information accords with the earlier book. But there is one essential difference between them — it seems that Professor Fritz Redlich, the author of *Hitler: Diagnosis of a Destructive Prophet*, is convinced that the account of the Russian autopsy describing how he had only one testicle is substantiated by other circumstantial evidence.

Conclusions drawn from this are speculative. It is not unusual for a doctor to examine young men and to find that one testicle cannot be felt. It is then essential to make certain that it is not hidden away in the abdomen.

Undescended testes are more likely to become malignant and need removal. In other men, as apparently in Hitler, one testis is never present.

Perhaps, surprisingly, there is often little embarrassment,



Hitler's testes: new evidence

but in the sensitive it could contribute to impotence. It is not likely to be a cause of infertility or lack of masculinity as the one remaining testis copes admirably.

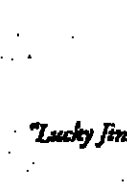
Hitler's other genital problem was hypospadias, in which the meatus, the aperture of the urethra, opens on the underside rather than at the end of the penis.

Not uncommonly seen in genitourinary clinics, it is not usually inconvenient. But if it causes embarrassment or problems when urinating, urologists can soon resite the opening. Sex is not affected.

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Facing the truth about Jackie

The film biography of Jacqueline du Pré has provoked a vitriolic response. But confronting the painful truths of her life is the only way we can fully understand her genius, says Sandra Parsons

In a letter to *The Times* yesterday, six of classical music's great and good registered their dismay at a new film about the cellist Jacqueline du Pré. Hilary and Jackie, which was premiered in London last night, is powerful, emotive and may well win Emily Watson an Oscar for her magnificent portrayal of Jackie. It is about the extraordinary relationship between Jacqueline and her older sister Hilary, and features the revelation, already made by Hilary in a book co-written with her brother Piers, that she allowed Jacqueline to have an affair with Kifner, her husband of ten years, and move in with them at their home in the tranquil Hampshire countryside.

The reaction this revelation unleashed in the music world has been vitriolic. When the book was serialised in *The Times*, distinguished critics puffed themselves up to a crescendo of arrogance and pomposity as they searched for damning adjectives. Hilary and Piers were dismissed as bumpkins, amateur musicians who were "bitter and twisted", their perceived determination to share their sister's reputation made even more tawdry by the fact that she was dead.

The release of *Hilary and Jackie* has created a similar, Pavlovian reaction. Julian Lloyd Webber, one of the signatories to *The Times* letter, has declared the film "appalling" (although he concedes the acting is good). Together with Yehudi Menuhin, Itzhak Perlman, William Pleeth, Mstislav Rostropovich and Pinchas Zukerman, he says the film portrays du Pré as selfish, spiteful and manipulative. "This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew."

And there's the rub. Learning the truth about someone is always difficult; living with it is even harder. And being truthful about how that makes us feel about ourselves is perhaps the hardest of all.

Jackie, aged 42, ravaged by multiple sclerosis. She was a genius who played the cello with such emotion and brilliance that even those of us who do not occupy the upper stratosphere of music critics and musicians feel the hairs on our arms standing on end as we listen. Dying early, and of a cruel disease, served only to increase her status as an icon. It is the perceived tarnishing of

'Like the book, the film is uncynical and full of love'

that image which is now exercising her "friends and colleagues" so greatly. For them it is easier to condemn the messenger as a scandalous muck-raker than to contemplate the idea of an imperfect icon.

As Dr Stuttaford points out elsewhere on this page, multiple sclerosis causes brain damage which can have an appalling psychological effect on sufferers, often felt even before the disease is diagnosed and made all the more confusing by its tendency to come and go. This was undoubtedly the case with Jackie, and it goes a significant way to explaining the peculiarities of her behaviour. The fact that she was a genius explains the rest.

In common with many other multiple sclerosis sufferers, Jackie in her declining years was rude, obnoxious and apparently unfeeling about her family. She was also sexually uninhibited, which may partly account for her desire to sleep with Kifner. What makes the behaviour of Hilary so remarkable is that Jackie's 16-month affair with Kifner happened before she had been diagnosed with MS, and in any event before the psychological effects of the disease were widely known. From Hilary's point of view, her sister was losing her mind and needed Kifner. Hilary, in an extraordinary act of love and compassion, allowed her to have him.

Does this knowledge diminish in any way our appreciation of Jacqueline du Pré's music? Does it make her any less of a genius? Of course not. Rather, it enhances our understanding, and our sympathy. Or at least, it should.

I was closely involved in *The Times* serialisation of the book, and spent many hours with Hilary and Piers. They were almost childlike in their candour. Their love for Jackie was transparent, as indeed it is in the book. *A Genius in the Family*—a title denounced by the music critic Hugh Canning as "sarcastic and envious", which I think tells us rather more about him than it does about them.

While friends and colleagues of Jackie knew her through her music, Hilary and Piers' bond with her is altogether more fundamental. As Hilary told me then: "I don't think anyone can imagine what it is like to have a Jackie living in the family, and I say that with great love. But no one who has not experienced that can possibly imagine what it takes. It's not only difficult for the family, it's extremely difficult for the possessor of that genius."

"She didn't know she was understanding adult emotions when she was a very little girl, but she was, because you could see her doing it with her cello. She could make people cry, she could make people laugh. She played the Elgar with such poignancy as a young girl, and that must be incredibly hard to bear."

"Nobody could be with Jackie for long without being reduced by her. People could remain friends with her as long as they saw her occasionally, then they could take it, but people couldn't live with her week in, week out, because she unwittingly destroyed them."



The fierce genius of du Pré — even at an early age she could reduce an adult audience to tears with her cello playing

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The portrait Hilary paints of her sister is multi-layered, uncynical and full of love. To his credit, Anand Tucker's film achieves the same result. It unfolds in three stages. The first concentrates on Hilary and Jackie's childhood, while the second and third parts tell the story of their adult lives first through Hilary's eyes, then through Jackie's. It is a stunningly successful device in which the love scenes between Kifner and Jacqueline, derided in bilious fashion by music critics here, are handled tenderly.

The film is already on release in America, and the film critics of *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, unsullied by the small-minded pence across the pond, gave rave reviews. Kenneth Turan in the *LA Times* says: "The powerful yet delicate ties of sisterhood it illuminates are so intricate and mysterious, and so superbly acted, that this exploration is difficult to resist."

"One of the most insightful and wrenching portraits of the joys and tribulations of being a classical musician ever filmed," writes Stephen Holden in the *NY Times*. "You feel the intensity of their [Hilary and Jackie's] bond every second they're together."

Hilary du Pré has been so deeply hurt by the personal attacks made on her by the British music establishment that she no longer reads anything written about her or her sister. The honesty shines from the face of a woman who has shouldered with love and stoicism a burden which would make most of us buckle. I hope she does not. I hope the film is a resounding success. And I hope her critics feel rotten.

James Christopher

THE EFFECTS OF MS

THE musical intelligentsia is now arguing about Jacqueline du Pré's personality. Writers to *The Times* extol her virtues, while a contributor to the BBC's *Today* said she was "perfectly ghastly". The disagreement is not surprising. Jacqueline du Pré was suffering from a disease which would have fundamentally altered her personality.

The physical changes in her brain resulting from multiple sclerosis would, in the earliest stages, have waxed and waned so that any character defects would have varied from month to month or year to year. As with any brain damage, existing imperfections are likely to be exaggerated.

Forty years ago, when I was houseman at the Charing Cross Hospital, doctors debated whether MS was more likely to cause depression or hypomania (an unreasonably euphoric approach to life, coupled very often with inflated self-esteem, loquaciousness, irritability and sexual disinhibition). The argument was pointless — many patients have no detectable character changes, but others can exhibit either trait. A survey in 1991 showed 42 per cent of sufferers to be depressed, but the mechanism was not properly understood and in any case a character change hardly seemed surprising in view of their physical condition. Only when MRI scanning became established was it demonstrated that multiple sclerosis was liable to attack the higher centres which determine character.

PERSONALITY change may occur before a patient shows classic signs of multiple sclerosis such as transitory double vision, loss of balance, weakness of the limbs, changes in sensation or an uncertain bladder. Personality changes may be harder for a family to deal with than physical disability, as was revealed in *Families Affected by Multiple Sclerosis — Disease Impact and Coping Strategies*, published by the American National MS Society.

There was once, perhaps, an argument for keeping quiet about a deterioration in behaviour. Physical problems were enough for patients to deal with, without them worrying about their psyche — and, in any case, little could be done. The situation is now different. Multiple sclerosis can be treated with the beta interferons — interferon beta-1a or interferon beta-1b, such drugs as Betaferon (interferon beta-1a) and Avonex, and recently Rebif (interferon beta-1b).

Initially, interferon beta-1b was recommended only for patients whose condition was relapsing and remitting. Now it has been shown to help all patients. Only one in ten of patients at the relapsing-remitting stage receives treatment in Britain. About five times more receive it in Europe. Interferon is expensive but, if it had been available to Jacqueline du Pré, she might not only have been a great, if emotional, musician but also, perhaps, have spared her family and friends such turmoil.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

money. to a better age rate. % hassle.)



Hilary du Pré with the husband she "gave" to Jackie in an extraordinary act of love

STARRING ROLES AND SHATTERED REPUTATIONS

KNOCKING icons off their pedestals is a surprisingly rare sport in film. Not only is it considered bad taste, but it can be a hazardous and potentially expensive business. For every reputation successfully dismantled on screen, hundreds more are inflated, lionised or simply embellished. Nevertheless, there is a hardy strain of film that has genuinely succeeded in damaging, forever, the popular perceptions of some of our best-known cultural icons.

Four years after Joan Crawford's death in 1937, Frank Perry adapted her daughter Christina's novel *Montie Dearest* into a blistering screen attack on the legendary actress. Faye Dunaway offered a brilliant impersonation of Crawford as a demented mother who, when not screaming for an axe, created hair-raising scenes over her daughter's preference for padded clothes-hangers.

In Mike Nichols's 1990 film *Postcards from the Edge*, Carrie Fisher gave much the same treatment to her mother, Deborah Reynolds. In an expose of their volatile, drug-fuelled relationship.

Big political scalp has always been elusive. Oliver Stone was too much seduced by the power and charisma of Richard Nixon to truly put the boot in with his 1995 film *Nixon*. But Mike Nichols does manage a revealing and tantalising insight into Bill Clinton's character in his recent film *Primary Colors*. Even though presented as fiction, the film manages to be a near-definitive portrait of one of the most compromised Presidents in history. The arts have always boasted the most fragile reputations. Few will ever look at

T.S. Eliot and Vivienne Haigh-Wood in the same light after Brian Gilbert's 1994 film *Tom and Viv*, in which the painfully repressed poet fails to deal with the mental instability and medical difficulties of his lover. Francis Bacon came out of John Maybury's *Love is the Devil* (1998) as a manipulative sexual predator who sacrificed his gay, suicidal lover to his art. And Mozart and Beethoven emerged from Milos Forman's *Amadeus* (1984) and Bernard Rose's *Immortal Beloved* (1994) as foul-mouthed, manic-depressive geniuses. But the figure who has suffered the most unlikely demise is Jesus Christ, in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. To many, the Bible has never been quite the same since.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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A hole at the heart of this parliament

Once you get behind the jargon, there's still something missing

Reading government reports these days is like being smothered in cotton wool. The jargon is so pervasive that you sometimes wonder whether those who write actually know what they are trying to say.

Take this: "The aim is to provide an open, accessible, and above all participative Parliament, which will take a proactive approach to engaging with the Scottish people — in particular those groups traditionally excluded from the democratic process." Or this: "We believe that the arrangements for the programming of business in the Scottish parliament should be inclusive and transparent, and should provide reasonable time for business initiated by non-executive parties..."

Or this: "Power-sharing is not only about the balance of power between the Scottish executive and the Scottish parliament, but also about the empowerment of external groups and individuals in all sectors of Scottish society."

This kind of language may be largely gobbledegook for the shopper on Paisley High Street, but if it makes sense to the 1 per cent of the population which is likely to read it, is that not enough? After all, those key-words — accessible, participative, empowerment — are part of the lexicon of our times. The document I quote from is — perhaps — one of the key constitutional papers of our time. It is the report of the Government's consultative steering group (itself a jargon title) on how a Scottish parliament will govern. This is a latter-day Bagshot, an Erskine May in the making. It will set the tone for a new era in democracy. It had better be clear.

Because what it proposes is, if my translation is accurate, revolutionary. In seeking to shape a parliament as different as possible from the Westminster model, it has shifted power away from the elected administration, with its Cabinet and its traditional areas of influence, towards the members themselves, and even towards non-elected interests outside. It challenges the sole right of government to frame and enact Bills, and it hands to the lowest backbencher the ability to determine the fate of ministers and even the administration. All-party parliamentary committees will have the right, not just to scrutinise legislation, but to initiate Bills and pilot them through parliament, whatever the government of the day thinks of them. The power of the executive is diminished.

It requires a First Minister (as the Scottish Prime Minister will be called) to obtain the agreement of the parliament before appointing ministers. It enables a simple majority of members to veto any individual of the PM (yes, we will have to learn to love that too) comes up with. It hands parliament the right to remove a government law officer by a simple majority. It gives individual members the right to present a motion of no confidence in the executive (or government). It authorises committees to conduct inquiries into any aspect of policy, to summon and

examine ministers at will, to carry out a thorough assessment of laws passed or about to be passed. These and other measures amount to a democratic process that is far more Scandinavian than British — indeed the document is peppered with allusions to Norwegian and Swedish procedures.

Some of it sounds eminently sensible. The idea of ordinary working hours, reasonable holidays, and a clearly set-out code of conduct, should avoid some of the crises, both human and political, that have been a regular feature of the House of Commons. There will be an oath of allegiance, a proper Question Time once a week, a clearly defined four-year term, a set of committees covering broadly the same areas as their Westminster equivalents, and a Speaker (or Presiding Officer) whose remit is every bit as broad as Betty Boothroyd's. Indeed, given the interpretation that these rules will require, the Presiding Officer may turn out to be the most important person in the parliament. He (or she) will have to restrain the interventionist instincts of the Nationalists, and ensure that the consensus which the steering group envisages is given a chance to survive.

But the biggest question of all is nowhere addressed. Just what is this new body going to do? What is its vision, its sense of purpose? What will it achieve? A parliament is elected not just to manage the affairs of state, but to direct them, to show the people it represents where they should be going, and to get them there. It should be ready to govern, to push through measures which are likely to be unpopular, to take a stand which may require facing down the majority rather than acceding to it.

The last person I should be quoting at this point is Margaret Thatcher. After all, her style of government is precisely what a Scottish parliament is seeking to avoid. And yet she did articulate one aspect of government which this document avoids: the way in which policy is implemented rather than simply framed. At one point, early in her first administration, she said: "If you're going to do the things you want to do — and I'm only in politics to do things — you've got to have a togetherness, a unity in your Cabinet. There are two ways of making a Cabinet. One way is to have in it people who represent all the different viewpoints within the party, within the broad philosophy. The other way is to have in it only the people who want to go in the direction which every instinct tells me we have to go. Clearly, steadily, firmly, with resolution."

There is much in this blueprint for a Scottish parliament to applaud, much even to admire. But if there is to be real meaning behind the jargon, it will require an element not much referred to in its 170 pages of closely argued text, and that is a fairly simple one. It is called leadership.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Magnus Linklater

Peter Brookes 21 99



After the gold rush

The US economy is too strong to collapse when the Internet bubble bursts

Has the world gone completely mad? This question is heard these days with increasing frequency — and increasing desperation — in Edinburgh and the City of London, in Geneva and Zurich, in Boston and New York.

For years, the professional investment managers who earn telephone-number salaries for investing our trillions of pounds, dollars and euros in pension funds, insurance policies and unit trust savings, have been mocking the greedy fools — the naive, inexperienced American widows and orphans — who were buying shares in computer, Internet and electronics companies at ridiculously inflated prices. The experts have been warning that Wall Street, the financial home of 90 per cent of the world's electronic technology companies, is caught up in the mother and father of all speculative bubbles, a bubble whose inevitable explosion will eventually trigger a 1930s-style economic collapse in the United States and perhaps the world as a whole.

Yet with every such warning, Wall Street has soared even higher, with Internet and computer stocks doubling and redoubling. By the end of last week the frenzy had reached such a point that Yahoo!, an Internet indexing service which earned its first dollar only a year ago, was worth more than General Motors; Amazon.com, an online bookseller which has never even made a profit, is now the second most valuable retail firm in America. And that was all before this week's record-breaking takeoff on Wall Street, which saw the main indexes of US technology shares jump by 10 per cent in two days.

So who is right? The sober investment professionals who see the Internet frenzy as, at worst, an impending calamity and, at best, a ludicrous aberration — a millennial version of tulipmania and the South Sea Bubble? Or "naïve" Americans, who are watching their "supid" Internet investments double every six months — and are gradually reorientating their entire economy and way of life around the Internet and computer technology?

Well, I agree with both. Most of the shares hyped by today's Internet investors will be literally worthless within a few years or even perhaps months. Yet America's — and Wall Street's — faith in computer technology will continue to be richly rewarded in the long run.

It is very important, not only for investors but also for politicians and ordinary voters, to understand why both these statements are likely to be true. It is all too easy for technological Luddites and cultural conservatives in Europe and Asia to dismiss the "American model" of rapid economic growth, low unemployment and seemingly unstoppable prosperity as a "bubble phenomenon", a brief historical aberration related to mindless stock market speculation rather than any genuine superiority in American technology or economic management. I think this is a profound mistake. In arguing this, I must first explain my personal position.

I am a fully committed electronic "nerd". I bought my first PC, the size of a small suitcase, in 1982. I have five computers at home and I carry my mobile phone and my "mini-Reuters" personal news and market paper wherever I go, often working in taxis or on the Tube. I do most of my worldwide communication by e-mail. I bank on the Internet and have moved my PEPs to an online broker. And last year I arranged an entire four-week holiday in the United States, including finding and booking a beautiful beach house in Martha's Vineyard, entirely through the Internet.

Despite all this personal enthusiasm for technology, I am as convinced as any Luddite in the British investment community that American technology stocks will sooner or later collapse. To see why, it is only necessary to make two observations. First, nobody has yet found a way of making significant profits out of the Internet, whether by offering advertising, by charging for access or by selling goods and services. But much more dangerous for investors than the absence of a successful business model is a second objection: that as soon as a way of making serious money is discovered, competition will drive most of today's Internet companies out of business. Intense competition is, after all, the Internet's most essential quality — the costs of starting a business to sell goods or run a bank, or even to publish a newspaper on the Internet, are tiny compared with the costs of employing thousands of salesmen, setting up hundreds of branches or distributing millions of pages of newspapers.

So Internet companies will find it very difficult to make sustainably high profits unless they control proprietary technologies, enjoy powerful brand loyalty or offer services that are not only good but impossible to replicate. At present, none of this is true. And although investors currently assume that the first company to sell books, to index products, or to market computers, on the Internet will establish an unshakable loyalty among consumers, there is no reason to suppose that this will be true.

Economists describe the key problem faced by Internet businesses as "low barriers to entry". It can be put more graphically: the real danger of the Internet gold rush is not that the mother lode has yet to be discovered. A much greater hazard is that the pioneering prospectors, when they finally do strike paydirt, will be trampled to death by the thousands behind them in the rush.

But the dubious financial outlook for firms whose only real attraction to investors is that they offer a glint of Internet gold-dust should not hide the far more important business and social implications of the new technology. And the justifiable concern about an "Internet bubble" on Wall Street should not distract attention from the genuine strength of the American economy. Still less should it be used by economic policymakers in Europe and Japan as an excuse for failing to learn from America's economic success.

As recently as last month, for example, both Wim Duisenberg, the head of the European Central Bank, and Eisuke Sakakibara, the head of Japan's Ministry of Finance, maintained that they had little to learn from America's prosperity, which was simply based on a stock market bubble. Americans were living off unsustainable stock market gains and had stopped saving for the future. Once stock market prices fell, the American economy would simply collapse. But the notion that Americans would ultimately be impoverished by the bursting of the stock market bubble is highly implausible.

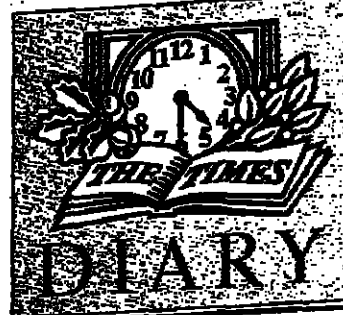
The idea that Americans have stopped saving because of their stock market gains is largely a statistical illusion, caused by the fact that taxes on realised capital gains are deducted from personal income, while the gains are not counted as income. As shown in a recent report by Douglas Lee, the Washington-based US economist for HSBC, American saving would not have fallen between 1995 and 1997 if taxes and capital gains had been treated in a consistent way. In fact, Americans have saved so much that, even after a 40 per cent collapse of the stock market, American families would have more savings than they ever had before 1996 — and more than the Germans or the Japanese. This cynics who expect the American economy to be destroyed when the Internet bubble explodes will be disappointed.

Maintaining a sober, realistic attitude to the Internet bubble is even more important from a longer-term industrial and social perspective. In the long term, it hardly matters whether or, more precisely, when investors will lose their fortunes in an explosion of the Internet bubble. What matters more is that the rest of the world should learn from America's exemplary success in both macroeconomic management and industrial policy. What matters even more is that we all realise that new electronic technologies will dominate the most important businesses of the future; that countries whose national cultures embrace these technologies will enjoy a big competitive advantage and that the Internet specifically will revolutionise our way of life.

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Anatole Kaletsky



Bite back

REVENGE for Geoffrey Robinson, who is writing his autobiography. It promises to deliver a nasty knock to the PM; but most alarmingly it could reveal other beneficiaries of his largesse, and name the culprit who leaked the story of his fateful house loan to Peter Mandelson.

Robinson will also dwell on his humble origins with his parents Bob and Dot. Having established his proletarian credentials, the millionaire protégé of Robert Maxwell is likely to relish the chance to disclose the behind-the-scenes backbiting which caused his fall. As well as detailing Cabinet splits, he could name his erstwhile crony, Charles Whelan, as the source of the leak.

When I rang rich Robbo at his suite at Grosvenor House he was coy: "I could not possibly talk to you about it, but it was delightful of you to call." If it cheers up the old boy...

● WELL done Ben Wegg-Prosser, able young aide to Peter Mandelson, who is going over to the enemy as assistant to the Editor of The Sun. A peacemaker, he will patch up a few strained friendships.

Acting up

OUR grandest theatrical Dame, Judi Dench, has forgiven Gwyneth Paltrow (left). On the set of *Shakespeare in Love*, Judi moaned to the director about the starlet's "diva-like antics" (Gwyneth enjoyed be-



ing driven the 50R from her trailer to the set, and Dame Judi said she "would be happier if the leading lady would speak to me once in a while"). At the film's post-premiere party, Gwyneth was glacially polite: "Goodbye all. Goodbye photographers, goodbye Judi, see you soon." "Oh, surely," said Dench, with impressive enthusiasm.

● SUPPORT for Menzies Campbell to replace Paddy Ashdown has been damaged by his support for Tony Blair's bombing of Baghdad, not least because he failed to tell Lib-Dem MPs that he was to be made a Privy Counsellor. "It's a choice between two lay dogs," says a senior figure. "Charles Kennedy or Nick Harvey."

Bug trouble

NERDS were pleasantly puzzled when Margaret Beckett presented NCC awards to firms inoculating themselves against the millennium bug. Strangely, ministers keep well clear of such doos. Some in the audience wondered if the Leader of the House, a caravan enthusiast, confused the sponsor, the National Computing Centre, with the National Caravaning Club.



Unless you carry an opt-out card, your body will be used for Chinese medicine.

● NEVER a natural Liberal. Paddy Ashdown. When elected leader, he sent a memo: "Please remove David Steel's dead animal from my wall." It was a tiger skin from Chief Butheletzi. He was so detached that once he even had to be shown to his Lords whips' office.

Paisley ploy

IAN PAISLEY Jr is spreading his unique brand of Protestant supremacy in next week's *Catholic Herald*. The son of the DUP leader is to justify why he is touring for members in Liverpool. Youngish Paisley attacks Catholics for questioning his party's plans to move to the mainland, and mutters about the need for "a dose of enlightenment". Cristina Odone, once the paper's astute controversial Editor, is appalled: "He should not have a platform. This could have dangerous effects on Liverpool."

JASPER GERARD

'In rapture, and almost in shock, the Democratic Party embraced President Clinton's vision'

The minute that President Clinton walked on to the floor of the House of Representatives on Tuesday night, it was obvious how foolish Republicans had been to dream that they might bully him into cancelling his State of the Union address.

There is no setting that shows off his political talents to more advantage than the big speech, delivered under siege, pitched to ordinary Americans clear over the heads of his foes. Standing in the well of the House in front of his massed accusers, speaking fluently for 75 minutes, he proved an outstanding witness for the case that he should be allowed to serve out the remaining 730 days of his presidency.

His day job — formally defending himself in the Senate against charges of perjury and obstruction of justice — is going less well. That is not the fault of his

lawyers; the weakness is in the case they have to present. Even so, in a drama which already looked likely to tilt in his favour in the end, their client has gone a long way to write himself a happy ending.

It cannot have been fun, though, to be on the Clinton legal team this week. The prosecution, in the shape of 13 managers of the House of Representatives, had launched a powerful opening attack, reaching a folksy, populist climax on Saturday. With relish, they adopted comically varied styles — the excessive gravitas of a Founding Father, the showy slickness of an LA Law hotshot, or the obsessive tenacity of an Oliver Stone protagonist. But they each horned in on a single point, with powerful repetition: no man is above the law.

The President's leading lawyer, Charles Ruff, was right not

to attempt to match this showmanship. For five hours on Tuesday, slouched in his wheelchair, he quietly laid out the case for the defence. He scored good points on the uncorroborated status of the evidence and on factual errors in the prosecution's case. He revived the notion of censure as a possible compromise.

But he was stuck with the embarrassing legal straddle which lies at the heart of the Clinton defence: the claim that the President isn't guilty, but that even if he is, the offences are not serious enough to justify removing him from office. That dual claim will not sound any better as the days go on. But for now, at least, Americans don't want him pushed out.



Brown Maddox

That sentiment strengthened with Tuesday's speech. The President strode on to the House floor, hugging supporters and enemies, and declared: "My fellow Americans, I stand before you tonight to report that the state of our union is strong." If you hadn't known he was the second President in American history to be impeached, and that he was fighting for the survival of his presidency, you would never have guessed it.

The Democrats' responses were faultlessly choreographed, with Vice-President Al Gore leading them in standing ovation after ovation. Mr Clinton praised by name a calculated but moving roster of guests from the widows of the two recently murdered

Capitol Hill police officers to Rosa Parks, who inspired the civil rights movement when she refused to sit in the back of an Alabama bus. As skilfully, he unveiled a wish-list which Republicans will find dangerous to block, even though it undermines their plans for tax cuts. His centrepiece — a vow to use the budget surplus to restock the state pension scheme — is hugely popular. So is more cash for education. There is hardly anything which Republicans could strike down without reigniting charges that they are the hard-hearted party of the rich.

From a President who has outraged much of his party by his centrism, it was a clearly Democratic vision of the future. In rapture, and almost in shock, his party embraced it.

For a year, Mr Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky has paralysed the country's politics. As Joe Klein, author of *Primary Colors*, said in *The New Yorker*, that this may have been no bad thing, preventing itchy politicians from interfering with the economy. Mr Clinton might mischievously claim to have lifted government off the backs of the people, even if he has forced it on to their television screens.

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SPARE I



THE ASHDOWN PARTY

A departure in his own time and with his own legacy

It is given to few actors at Westminster to choose their time to leave the stage. Fate often robs politicians of what they believe destiny owes them. But yesterday, by announcing his resignation as Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown chose to shape a day's events rather than submit to them. In that respect his going matches his tenure as leader. More than any other Liberal leader in living memory Mr Ashdown shaped the party of his time.

Mr Ashdown became leader at a moment of grieving for Liberals. The high expectations which had attended the birth of the Liberal/SDP alliance in 1981 had given way to electoral reverses and recrimination by 1987. Out of the ashes, a new party was formed and although social democratic dissidents saw it as no more than Liberalism rebranded, the Liberal Democrats were a genuinely new force.

Mr Ashdown attempted to fuse the traditional Liberal emphasis on dispersal of power with the more disciplined, even technocratic, strains of the SDP. It was hard plying. But after the humiliation of trailing behind the Greens in the 1989 European elections, the party, as a useful vehicle of protest for those alienated by both Neil Kinnock and Margaret Thatcher, began to score notable victories in by-elections. The slow degeneration of the Conservatives under John Major, and the subsequent modernisation of Labour under Tony Blair, created new opportunities, and threats, for Mr Ashdown.

His stature was enhanced by the wisdom and humanity of his response to the Bosnian conflict and his popularity grew with his increasing mastery of the media. Building on a strong base in local government, he read the 1997 election with calm foresight, exploiting anti-Tory feeling to secure the largest parliamentary representation for any third party since the time

of Lloyd George. Although this force was newly-swollen and confident, it was dwarfed by Labour's majority. But Mr Ashdown exploited a warm personal relationship with Mr Blair, and habits of co-operation developed during the campaign for a Scottish Parliament, to secure a remarkable level of influence on the new Government. Liberals secured places on a Cabinet committee and Mr Ashdown defeated his dissidents to forge an evolving policy of co-operation.

Mr Blair's devolution schemes and his adoption of proportional representation for European elections were Labour measures but Liberal Democrat victories. The greatest prize, proportional representation for Westminster, eluded Mr Ashdown's grasp, snatched from it by Labour's own conservatives. That failure led many to question the wisdom of Mr Ashdown's constructive stance towards Labour. But purist regrets should not blind Liberals to the scale of their gains. They should recognise that half a loaf is better than crumbs from the table.

Who will now inherit the spread? The most respected of Mr Ashdown's lieutenants, and his closest ally in co-operating with Labour, is Menzies Campbell. But his age would give his leadership a sense of the caretaker. Among the younger MPs Malcolm Bruce, Charles Kennedy, Simon Hughes and Nick Harvey stand out. But the first three not only lack Mr Campbell's weight; they also do not share his enthusiasm for co-operation. Mr Harvey, although closer to the party's rural roots, is remarkable among Liberals for his euroscepticism. The leadership election to come may be civil, but it cannot avoid laying bare the tensions within Liberal Democracy. It is a tribute to Mr Ashdown that he will be all the more then seen to have managed those strains with skill, grace and fortitude.

WAKEHAM'S WATCH

An opportunity for substantial and timely Lords reform

Six months ago the Government's plans for a reformed second chamber were near shambles. Its Stage One proposals for an interim House were set to give Tony Blair a power of patronage unknown since Oliver Cromwell introduced a wholly nominated Upper House in 1657. Its thoughts for Stage Two were so vague as to suggest that no serious scheme would ever be enacted. A parliamentary war on all fronts appeared inevitable. As a result, Mr Blair sacked Lord Richard who had, eventually, tried and failed to achieve some consensus. In one of the wilder twists in a tortured tale, Lord Cranborne was then sacked by William Hague because he succeeded in meeting that task.

The White Paper published yesterday does not bring the Government entirely out of the woods but it does bring a decent outcome much closer. The Royal Commission, to be chaired by Lord Wakeham, has an opportunity to rebalance Britain's constitution. The appointment of the former Conservative Cabinet minister is exceptionally cunning even by the standards of this Prime Minister. It will not now be easy for the Opposition to suggest that the Commission is in a Downing Street pocket. While he is more of a "fixer" than a philosopher on constitutional questions, that may prove an advantage. The options for Lords reform are limited, well-known and do not require much intellectual anguish: there will be other members of the Commission to fulfil the Nuffield College role.

The transitional arrangements put forward by the Government are broadly satisfactory. Mr Blair is entitled to seek a more balanced partisan position than that which presently prevails. He has abandoned a modest but significant degree of personal patronage. The notion of "people's peers" is a belated candidate for the

most crass and shameless British political stunt of the century. But this part need not invalidate the whole.

The Royal Commission has been set a suitably strict timetable and appropriately elastic terms of reference. The best final settlement would be, as we outlined last summer, a mixture of directly elected and independently appointed members. The Government, it seems from the White Paper, sympathises with such a strategy. It is important, however, that the proportion of directly elected representatives is high enough to bring the new chamber legitimacy. A token 15 or 20 per cent would not satisfy that demand; 50 per cent would.

There is a case, as George Foulkes, MP, is arguing, for some nominated members to be drawn from or determined by the Scottish parliament and Welsh and Ulster assemblies. This may strengthen the fragile bonds of the United Kingdom. Nomination from the various English regional bodies that the Government may create is far less convincing. That would smack of inventing an artificial function for these rightly unloved prospective creatures. Britain does not need a pseudo-federal model based on the German *Bundesrat*.

If the Royal Commission sticks to its schedule, the Stage Two reform should be ready by the end of this Parliament. It is unlikely that Lord Wakeham and his colleagues will devise a prospectus that is administratively or politically impractical. A stronger and more credible second chamber is essential if the checks and balances that once operated within Parliament are to be reconstructed. The Government needs to be equally radical when it comes to restoring the authority of the House of Commons. There is still some distance from a final outcome. But what once threatened to be a dog's breakfast may now become a more appealing meal.

SPARE THE AU PAIR

A policy that harms those it seeks to help

The minimum wage is intended to help those on low pay. Yet, as we report today, among the first victims of this counter-productive policy when it is introduced in April are likely to be Britain's au pairs. No doubt motivated by good intentions, the Department of Trade and Industry has stated that these young foreigners should be eligible for the minimum wage. If the Government sincerely wishes to make childcare affordable for working parents, it should heed pleas to exempt au pairs from this damaging piece of interventionist meddling.

For hard-pressed parents, who cannot afford a nanny, au pairs provide a perfect option to help with child care and light domestic chores. To young foreigners, working in a British home while being given pocket money is an ideal means of supporting themselves as they study English. By fulfilling their mutual needs in this way, the relationship between au pair and "host" family is unlike that between most employers and employees. Many au pairs are assimilated into their families, living meals at the same table, even going on holiday together. Few would compare themselves with sweatshop workers, slaving away for a pittance.

Ministers, however, appear to have bundled au pairs in with other workers

whom they regard as on poverty pay or unprotected from exploitation. Although there will always be potential exploiters, the Home Office already regulates an au pair's work and placement. Its guidelines stipulate that au pairs are young foreigners who "come to the United Kingdom for the purposes of learning the English language". In return for free board, lodging and pocket money of about £40 a week, the au pair is expected to work about five hours a day, with two days off a week.

Forcing parents to pay au pairs aged 18 to 21 £3.00 an hour, and those aged 22 and over £3.60 an hour, would increase their pocket money to between £75 and £90 per week. For many low and medium paid parents this could be the increase that forces them to look elsewhere for child care. Lower demand for au pairs would lessen the inducement for young foreigners to come to Britain to learn English, denying them the rich and valuable experience that others have enjoyed.

Au pairs are exempt from another costly regulation, the Working Time Directive. The same common sense should be applied to the minimum wage. If Ministers are concerned about the plight of au pairs, they should enforce the existing regulations more stringently. The minimum wage will do more harm than good.

Morality of UK's manufacture and export of arms

From the Chairman and Chief Executive of Alvis plc

Sir, The only coherent basis for blanket opposition to the arms trade, as emotionally expressed by Matthew Parris in his column, "Arms and immorality" (January 16), is pacifism.

To believe in the right of sovereign states to resist aggression by force, as I imagine Matthew Parris does, but simultaneously to oppose the international trade in defence equipment, is tantamount to restricting the right of self-defence to those countries capable of producing all their own military equipment needs. This is nonsensical, even immoral.

The RAF is buying transport helicopters from the US because it would be uneconomic to build them here. The UK is exporting Hawk jet trainers to Australia. Only pacifists could argue that this is wrong, and it follows from this that the policy which successive British governments have followed for many years, which is that defence equipment exports are right in some circumstances and wrong in others, is the right one.

Matthew Parris argues that the policy is cynically applied. I have been involved in the defence exporting business for more than 20 years, both in Whitehall and in the private sector, and that is not my experience. Successive British governments of different political persuasions have acted with an acute sense of responsibility in exercising their judgment on when defence exports should be allowed

and when not. The fact that in a small number of cases such judgments have been proved to be wrong, usually with the benefit of hindsight, does not invalidate the policy which requires such judgments to be made.

The argument that the UK's economic performance has been adversely affected by the level of defence expenditure, or of defence research in particular, is, to say the least, unproven. For every academic study that supports this there is another which supports the opposite view.

In fact, UK defence expenditure has declined sharply as a percentage of GNP, and one does not have to be an economist to believe that at today's level of £1.3 billion per annum, or less than 0.2 per cent of GNP, government spending on defence research is unlikely to be a crucial determinant of UK economic performance.

I am not expert on Eurofighter, but it has been developed by a number of European countries not for its export potential but to meet a perceived European defence need, and is therefore irrelevant to the argument about defence exports.

To attempt to boil down all the issues involved in defence export policy into one question of whether it is right to sell an African a gun with which to shoot another African is a good rhetorical trick, but it does not do justice either to the important security, political and economic issues involved, or to the respectable moral basis on which many thousands of people work in the defence manufac-

turing and exporting business.

Yours faithfully,
NICK PREST,
Chairman and Chief Executive,
Alvis plc,
34 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1W 0AL,
January 18.

From Sir David Gore-Booth

Sir, I don't often feel the need to quibble with Matthew Parris. But I must take issue with part of his soul-searching piece on the arms trade.

The then Government did not authorise the sale of arms worth £630 million to President Saddam Hussein. True, there was an Export Credits Guarantee Department line of credit, and, true, Saddam still owes us the money; but this was not for arms.

As I and others made clear to Sir Richard Scott at his inquiry, the Government was extremely cautious about selling arms to Saddam (unlike some others). Such sales were counted in tens rather than hundreds of millions of pounds and consisted mainly of radios and Range Rovers.

Under the "case by case" approach which Parris calls unwarrantable, a deal to sell Hawk aircraft to Iraq (which might have been worth the sort of figure he mentions) was shot down.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GORE-BOOTH
(Assistant Under Secretary of State,
Middle East, 1989-92),
27 Wetherby Mansions,
Earl's Court Square, SW5 9BH.

Air noise threat to Britten legacy

From the Chief Executive of Aldeburgh Productions and others

Sir, The Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, the Britten-Pears School, the Britten-Pears Library — the legacy of Benjamin Britten, one of this country's greatest composers, is severely threatened.

This week the Inspector for the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Inquiry will hear evidence on whether aviation should be permitted at the redundant military base RAF Bentwaters, three miles from Snape.

Snape Maltings Concert Hall's legendary acoustics and its unique location in tranquil and beautiful marshlands have inspired some of the world's finest musicians to perform and record there, attracting audiences from all over the world. The immense cultural, educational and economic influence of this legacy faces irreparable damage.

The Inspector should be under no illusion about the seriousness of this threat to one of our country's cultural jewels. We urge him to be bold and close the door on all aviation at Bentwaters.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN REEKIE,
Chief Executive,
Aldeburgh Productions,
EDWARD HEATH,
HUMPHREY LYTTELTON,
MURRAY PERAHLIA,
GRIFF RHYS JONES,
JOAN SUTHERLAND,
Aldeburgh Productions,
High Street, Aldeburgh,
Suffolk IP15 5AX,
January 15.

Early bath for RFU

From Mr Michael Ambler

Sir, I turned to the letters page today expecting to read any number of letters decrying the state of rugby administration. Instead there was one humorous letter on the state of prop forwards' ears.

Am I alone in wishing that the Rugby Football Union resign en masse and that elections be held to fill those posts with people who actually have the future of the game at heart? It seems to me that the RFU wants England to become the pariah of rugby. The ongoing arguments about leagues, tours, Five Nations, etc. are enough to drive the average supporter or player to despair. It is a wonder that we see such good rugby week after week, when the players appear to have such poor support from those who control their destiny.

Perhaps the RFU should do away with their committees and working parties and get Bill Beaumont to discuss all the current problems over a glass of beer with the other countries.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL AMBLER,
8 Cornfield, Fareham,
Hampshire PO16 8UE,
January 20.

Liquid intake

From the Reverend Peter Mullen

Sir, I have so often profited from the wisdom of my affectionate friend, distinguished colleague and former vicar Dr James Bentley (letter, January 15) that I am reluctant to reply to his most recent admonishment. However, I must insist that the tautologous nature of the injunction, "Drink more fluids" derives not from the understanding that, as Dr Bentley rightly informs us, fluids may be taken in by other methods than drinking, but from the fact that it is only fluids that can be drunk.

I realise we might drink a solution. But is this the answer?

Yours sincerely,
PETER MULLEN,
St Michael, Cornhill and
St Sepulchre-Without-Newgate,
The Watch House,
10 Giltspur Street, EC1A 9DE,
January 15.

Doctors in a spin

From Dr Henry Wickens

Sir, Lord Denham's suggestion of "spinnomers" is an excellent one (letter, January 19), though I somehow suspect it won't catch on.

However, as a holder of a doctorate (and I don't know what "real" doctors think), my main objection to "spin-doctor" is not its usurping of the title but the fact that it mixes metaphors. You can put a spin on facts (as with a cricket ball or baseball), or you can doctor them (as with a set of accounts or a cat), but you can't doctor a spin, at least not on this side of the Atlantic.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY WICKENS,
14 Kalkwee,
L-7681 Waldbillig, Luxembourg,
January 19.

From Mr Jim Ward

Sir, May I suggest the term "glosser"? As well as sounding pejorative in its own right it lends itself to the construction of apposite limericks.

Yours etc,
JIM WARD,
30 Bennett Park,
Blackheath, SE3 9RB,
January 20.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Wilson and the US

From Sir Trevor Lloyd-Hughes

Sir, Prime Minister Harold Wilson pondered privately the idea of Britain becoming politically attached to the US (letters, December 30 and January 7). He never committed himself to official studies or papers, but, in my hearing, he twice discussed the idea personally with President Lyndon Johnson in the late 1960s.

Rebuffed by de Gaulle's "Non" to our entry into the EEC, increasingly dubious about the economic and political value of the Commonwealth, Wilson was acknowledging that since the last battle between us, at New Orleans in January 1815, Britain and America have been allies.

Militarily and financially, the US has aided us throughout this century; we do speak, roughly, the same language, which happens to be (what no European country can claim) the world's lingua franca; and, as Wilson knew, the winds of technical innovation and economic investment, like those of the weather, blow east across the Atlantic.

Should Britain move east or west, or stand alone? Whether continental Europe flourishes or succumbs in favour of closer political as well as economic union, this question, shelved by Wilson, will have to be faced in the next decade.

Yours faithfully,
TREVOR LLOYD-HUGHES
(Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1964-69; Chief Information Adviser to the Government, 1969-70),
52 Glen Road, Castle Bydham,
Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 4RJ,
January 8.

Medical negligence

From Dr Michael Saunders,
Chief Executive of
The Medical Defence Union

Sir, The number of medical negligence claims ("Litigation: will it be a free-for-all?" Law, January 12) is increasing at a rate of about 15 per cent a year. This has been reflected up to now by a similar increase in the size of compensation awards to patients.

In the last financial year the Medical Defence Union paid £48 million in compensation to patients — up from £39 million the previous year — and recent changes in the way that these awards are assessed mean that we can expect much larger payouts in the future. Over the last few months there have been a number of individual awards of over £3 million.

There is no evidence of a fall in clinical standards amongst the medical profession. Instead, changes in public attitudes and awareness have meant that patients are more likely to seek compensation through the courts. Where patients are harmed as a result of medical negligence it is right that they should be compensated fairly and quickly.

Litigation cost the NHS £235 million in 1996-97, much of which would have been accounted for by compensation payments for care that recipients had opted to take within the private sector. We believe that it is time for the Law Reform Act (Personal Injuries) 1945 to be amended so that patients who are harmed as result of NHS negligence can receive compensation that allows for their ongoing care by the NHS, and not from within the private sector.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SAUNDERS,
Chief Executive,
The Medical Defence Union,
3 Devonshire Place, WIN 2EA,
January 15.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Natural erosion of our coastline

From the Minister for Fisheries and the Countryside

Sir, Attempts to stop the natural processes that lead to the coastal erosion of Beachy Head would not only be doomed to failure but, as English Nature's Chief Scientist pointed out (letter, January 13), could also in many cases be undesirable.

Coastal erosion is a complex process and different solutions must be applied to different areas. We cannot simply go on building higher and higher walls in the face of rising sea levels. The time will inevitably come when we have to accept that nature will reshape our coastline in some areas. However, decisions will be made strategically and based on a clear assessment of the nature and value of the assets that are at risk. Shoreline management plans are being produced for the whole coastline of England and Wales. These address most of your leading article's concerns (January 18).

Mr John Gummer, MP, is wrong in claiming that this Government has implemented "savage" cuts in financial support for flood and coastal defences (report, January 13). Significant reductions were made to the grant rate formula for coast protection from

April 1997 by the previous administration. In contrast, MAFF funding has been increased from April 1999 for the next three years, and local authorities have had their Standard Spending Assessments increased by 4.9 per cent — somewhat above inflation.

I will not deny that there are some complexities but, contrary to your leading article's suggestion, MAFF is the single department in Whitehall with overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England.

Yours sincerely,
ELLIOT MORLEY,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food,
Nobel House,
17 Smith Square, SW1P 3JR,
January 20.

From Mr Roland Castro

Sir, The erosion of our coastline described in your Weekend supplement (January 16) is certainly alarming.

Are there lessons to be learnt from the Dutch who have successfully reclaimed so much of their country from the sea?

Yours faithfully,
ROLAND CASTRO,
3 Chester Close, SW1X 7BE,
January 17.

Goodman allegations

From Mr Michael Gelliot

Sir, I was very distressed to read your report today concerning allegations of financial impropriety against Lord Goodman. It is particularly sad that these have arisen now that he is sadly, and safely, dead.

As a most unimportant young man in the 1960s, I had the benefit of Lord Goodman's advice, support and unfailing courtesy and consideration. He granted me invaluable time, as well as significant financial help, on many occasions and his busy life, quite obviously altruistically. True, I sometimes had to visit him at breakfast time, once at the House of Lords before and after he made a speech. I have never experienced such ungrudging and unpatronising patronage.

I cannot have been alone in this —

but Lord Goodman did good by stealth. For me his name is entirely apt.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GELLIOT,
32 Beeches Road, SW17 7LZ,
January 19.

From Sir Hugh Leggatt

Sir, Lord Goodman was a great man whose generosity was boundless, particularly to those whose worthwhile aspirations merited his civilised concern.

It is a pity that his accusers should denigrate his reputation when he is no longer able to defend himself.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH LEGGATT,
Flat 1, 10 Bury Street,
St James's, SW1Y 6AA,
January 19.

Census and religion

From Dr J. Sherif

Sir, Dr David Coleman (letter, January 12) is unfair in singling out the Muslim community and other minorities over the proposed inclusion of religious affiliation in the 2001 census form. The need for such a question reflects the wishes of the main faith communities in the United Kingdom, including the Christian Churches.

An interfaith group, chaired by the Reverend Professor Leslie J. Francis, has prepared a "business case" in support of the proposal, using guidelines provided by the Office for National Statistics. Several government departments have indicated that statistics on religious affiliation would be very useful in their work, as it would lead to better resource allocation. So rather than creating a climate of "statistical apartheid", better data on religious affiliation will help in addressing issues of disadvantage and exclusion in society.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand have included such a question in their census. Is there evidence that this has "encouraged people to segregate themselves"?

Yours faithfully,
J. SHERIF
(Representative of the Muslim Council of Britain on the 2001 Census Religious Affiliation Group),
PO Box 52, Wembley HA9 0XW,
jsherif@webstar.co.uk
January 12.

The morning after

From Dr William Harrop-Griffiths

Sir, Dr Edward Young's suggestion that the headache experienced on January 1, 2000, should be awarded the medical term "millennium dome" (letter, January 18) prompts me to think about the likely utterances of those suffering from the condition. For once, the traditional cry of "Never again!" will have real meaning.

Yours etc,
WILLIAM HARROP-GRIFFITHS,
11 Rodway Road, SW15 5DN,
william@harrop-griffiths.demon.co.uk
January 18.

From Mr John Gillespie

Sir, Could the term be "typeover"? I do hope so.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN GILLESPIE,
The Old Stables, Widsenden,
Bethersden, Kent TN26 3EL.

From Mr John O'Byrne

Sir, Hangovers will not pose a problem as most people will be suffering from acute millennium.

Yours truly,
JOHN O'BYRNE,
2 Mount Argus Court,
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W,
January 18.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 20: The Princess Royal, Patron, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, today attended an International Task Force Symposium at 50 Halam Street, London W1.
Her Royal Highness, accompanied by Commodore Timothy Lawrence, RN, this evening attended the Rare Breeds Survival Trust's Horseshoe Appeal Banquet at Saddlers' Hall, Gutter Lane, Cheshire, London, EC2.

KENSINGTON PALACE
January 20: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, President, the Friends of the Elderly, this afternoon visited The Old Vicarage, the Society's newly rebuilt home in Moulford, Oxfordshire, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire (Mr. Kenneth C. Stisted), near Braine, Oxford.

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal, as Colonel, The Blues and Royals, will visit Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, at 9.30; and as president, Patrons of Crime Concerns, will attend the Pru Youth Action luncheon at noon at Prudential, Holborn Bars, London, EC1, at noon.

The Duke of Gloucester will attend a reception for ALEX Housing Association at ALEX House East Bank, Stamford Hill, London N16, at 3.00.

Sir Alexander and Lady Cairncross

A service of thanksgiving for the lives of Sir Alexander and Lady Cairncross will be held in the University Chapel, University of Glasgow, on Saturday, January 23, 1999, at 12.30pm. All welcome.

Highgate School

Mr John Mills has been appointed Treasurer and Chairman of Governors, with Sir Malcolm Field as Deputy Chairman, following the retirement of Mr David Richards and Mr Stuart Macdure.

Hertfordshire Lieutenancy

The following have been appointed Deputy Lieutenants of Hertfordshire:
Sir Nigel Hawthorne, Lord Laming and Commander Bryan Smalley.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Thomas (Stone) Jackson, Confederate general in the American Civil War, Clarksburg, Virginia, 1824; P. Morton Shand, architectural critic and translator of Gropius's *The New Architecture* and the Bauhaus, Kensington, 1888; Christian Dior, fashion designer, Granville, Normandy, 1917.
DEATHS: Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, poet and courtier, executed, London, 1547; Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, statesman, Amsterdam, 1683; Louis XVI, King of France, reigned 1774-93, executed, Paris, 1793; John Moore, physician and writer, London, 1802; Ludwig Achim von Arnim, poet, Dahme, Germany, 1831; Henry Hallam,

Birthdays today

Mr Mark Boleat, director-general, Association of British Insurers, 50; Dr Alan Borg, director, Victoria and Albert Museum, 57; Sir John Burnett, former Vice-Chancellor, Edinburgh University, 77; Dr David Carey, former legal secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 82; Lord Cayer, 89; Mr John Denison, former director, South Bank Centre, 88; Mr Ricardo Domingo, 89; Mr George Foulkes, MP, 57; Dr John Hayes, former director, National Portrait Gallery, 70; Miss Jean Sarah Law, former Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, 83; Mr Ken Magrath, MP, 61; Mr Jack Nicklaus, golfer, 59; Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, 61; Mr Paul Potts, Editor-in-Chief, The Press Association, 49; Miss Seane Reid, director, Scottish Arts Council, 49; Mr Paul Scofield, actor, 77; Mr Aubrey Singer, former deputy director-general and managing director, BBC Television, 72; Mr Christopher Stewart-Smith, former president, Association of British Chambers of Commerce, 58; the Marquess of Tavistock, 59; Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Trowbridge, 78; Sir Andrew Turnbull, civil servant, 54; Mr Laurence Whistler, glass engraver, 87; Mr Norman Willis, former General Secretary, TUC, 66.

Lecture

The London Institute
Mr Ian Breckwell, contemporary artist, writer and filmmaker will discuss his work at the Cochrane Theatre, WCI, on Monday, January 25, at 7.00pm. For complimentary tickets call the Box Office on 0171 242 7040.

historian, London, 1859; Alexander Herzen, socialist, Paris, 1870; Franz Grillparzer, dramatist, Vienna, 1872; John Couch Adams, astronomer, Cambridge, 1892; Len (Vladimir Ilyich) Ulanov, Russian revolutionary, 1924; Lytton Strachey, writer, Hingford, Berkshire, 1932; George Moore, novelist, London, 1933; George Orwell (Eric Blair), novelist, London, 1950; Cecil B. de Mille, film producer, Hollywood, 1959.
Tad cars were officially recognised in Britain, 1907.
The first Monte Carlo car rally began, 1911.
USS *Nauticus*, the first nuclear submarine, launched, 1954.
Concorde made its inaugural flight to Bahrain, 1976.



A tiger in the safety of London Zoo yesterday where Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, and Derek Fatchett, a Foreign Office Minister, launched a campaign to stop the illegal trade in tiger parts which has cut their population in the wild to less than 5,000, compared to 100,000 a century ago. The campaign, organised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, aims to stop tiger poaching and to reduce the use of tiger parts in traditional Chinese medicine. Mr Meacher said: 'The tiger is a magnificent animal and the sight of a tiger in the wild is a rare and precious sight. It is a symbol of the wild and the beauty of the natural world. It is a creature that has inspired artists and writers for centuries. It is a creature that we must protect and preserve for the future of our planet.'

Luncheons

Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers
Admiral Sir Derek Refill, Master of the Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers, presented the Silver Award to Industry to Mr Barry Widdowson, Group Managing Director of London Taxi International, for the design and manufacture of the new TXI taxi, at a luncheon held yesterday at Tallow Chandlers' Hall.
Consular Corps of London
Vice-Admiral Sir James Weatherall, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, was the guest of honour at a luncheon of the Consular Corps of London held yesterday at the Hyatt Carlton Tower Hotel. Mr Lawrence Landau, president of the corps, was in the chair.

Church news

Appointments
The Rev Gillian Reeves, Assistant Curate, Caterham St Mary the Virgin, St Laurence, St Paul (Southwark); to be Team Vicar, Whyteleafe St Luke (same diocese).
The Rev Tony Roske, Vicar, Bournemouth St Andrew Bennett Road (Winchester); to be Vicar, Fernhurst (Chichester).
The Rev Keith Robinson, Priest-in-charge, Laverstock (Salisbury); to be also Rural Dean of Salisbury (same diocese).
The Rev Wendy Saunders, Assistant Curate, Thameshead Team (Southwark); has been appointed Priest-in-charge, Eltham St Saviour (same diocese).
The Rev Wayne Stillwell, Curate, Necton, Holme Hale W. North and South Pickenham (Norwich); to be Curate, Eastbourne Holy Trinity (Chichester).
The Rev Dr Jean Wadsworth, Priest-in-charge, New Eltham all Saints (Southwark); has been appointed Vicar, same benefice.
The Rev David Williams, Priest-in-charge, Rochford St Andrew, and Rural Dean of Rochford (Chichester); to be also Non-Residential Canon, Cheshamford Cathedral (same diocese).

Memorial services

The Earl of Meath
A service of thanksgiving for the life of the Earl of Meath was held yesterday in Christ Church, Bray, County Wicklow. The Rev Baden Stanley, rector, officiated.
Major Sir Richard Keane, Mr Philip Wingfield and Mr Brian Studdert read the lessons. The Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland pronounced the blessing. The choir of St Columba's College and Christchurch sang during the service.
Members of the family, friends and representatives of Combe Hospital, Dublin, the Hospital Sunday Fund, SSAFA and Forces Help and the Royal British Legion were among those present.

Sir William Mather
The Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire, the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester and the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside were present at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Sir William Mather, a former Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire and industrialist, held yesterday at St Peter's, Presbury, Cheshire. The Rev William Mather, son, officiated, assisted by Canon David Astworth.
Mr Thomas Mather and Mr Justin Murray, grandsons, read the lessons. Mr Peter Mather, son,

Dinners

United Warps Club
The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Sheriff and Mrs B. Harris, was a speaker at the anniversary dinner of the United Warps Club of the City of London held last night at the Mansion House. Miss Sylvia Tait, president, was in the chair. Alderman Sir Peter Gauden and Judge Michael Hyam, Recorder of London, also spoke.
Shipwrights' Company
The Earl of Incheape, Prime Warden of the Shipwrights' Company, presented the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal for the Shipwrights' Company of 1998 to Mr Warren Porter of AMEC Process & Energy, Wallasey. Mr Gary Simpson of Devonport Management and Mr David Parton of Amalgamated Marine (SEA), Bournemouth, at a ceremony, held yesterday at Ironmongers' Hall.
Afterwards, Lord Incheape presided at the election dinner. Mr Stanley Martin was the principal guest and speaker. Among those present were:

The Ambassador of Poland, the Master of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames, the Dean of the Corporation of Hammer of Glasgow, the First Sea Lord and the President of the Chamber of Shipping.
Lord Henley
Lord Henley was the host at a dinner of the Durham University Students' Society held last night at the House of Lords. Sir Kenneth Calman, the new Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, and Lady Calman were the principal guests.
MCC
The President of Marylebone Cricket Club was in the Chair at a Club Dinner held at Lord's last night. Eric Tindall, proprietor of the 'Cricket' and the President responded.

Latest wills

Lord Rivedale, of Grindelford, Derbyshire, left estate valued at £224,499.
James Joseph Thompson, of Chilton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, left estate valued at £24,499 net. She left £200 to the Royal British Legion.
Deceaseds
The Rev Norman Drummond, from Kilmar and Stenochill.
The Rev Peter Robertson, from Dallas linked with Rufford.
Retirements
The Rev Alastair F. McCormick, from Creich linked with Rosell.
The Rev Stanley Hill, from Muiravonside.

Church of Scotland

Appointments
Induction
The Rev Iain Paton, to Elie linked with Kilcomquhar and Collingburgh.
Translations
The Rev Stephen J. Smith, from St Rule's, Monifieth, Dundee to Clark Memorial, Largs.
The Rev James S. A. Cowan, from Ardgowan, Greenock to Ardmuir, Barrhead.
Ordination and Introduction
The Rev Jennifer MacRae, to Netherlee as Assistant Minister.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr R.I.R. Broadbent and Mrs S.E. Cockayne
The engagement is announced between Richard, son of Captain and Mrs P.R. Broadbent of Warrford, Hampshire, and Sarah, eldest daughter of Dr and Mrs R.E. Cockayne, of Woolpit, Suffolk.
Dr H.C.R. Bayly and Mrs C.R. Lawson
The engagement is announced between H.C.R. Bayly, son of Mr and Mrs Ed Bayly, of New Plymouth, New Zealand, and Catherine, younger daughter of Dr and Mrs Eric Lawson, of Cambridge.
Mr P.D.G. Chard and Miss S.L. Dwyer-Thomson
The engagement is announced between P.D.G. Chard, son of Mr and Mrs Alan Chard, of Woodside Park, London, and Sarah Louise, daughter of Mr and Mrs Denis Thomson, of Rhiwlan, Cardiff.
Mr J.H.W. Coghill and Miss A.M. Shaw
The engagement is announced between J.H.W. Coghill, son of Mr and Mrs S.H. Coghill, of Stoke Newington, London, and Amanda, only daughter of Mr and Mrs James F. Shaw, of Prestbury, Cheshire.
Mr C. Geldard and Miss J.E. Renner
The engagement is announced between Christopher, son of Anne and Peter Geldard, and Julie, daughter of Sue and Tony Renner.
Mr J.W. Gibson and Miss L.C. Griffin
The engagement is announced between John, only son of Mr and Mrs J.W. Gibson, of Sudbrooke, Lincolnshire, and Jessica, only daughter of Professor James Griffin and the late Mrs Catherine Griffin, of Oxford.
Mr S.T. Hartley and Miss S.A. O'Driscoll
The engagement is announced between S.T. Hartley, only son of Mr and Mrs S.T. Hartley, of Salter's, Cornwall, and Sarah, only daughter of Mr and Mrs P.B. O'Driscoll, of Tetenhall, Wiltshire.
Dr R.J.K. Khan and Dr J.C. Miles
The engagement is announced between R.J.K. Khan, son of Dr and Mrs R.A. Khan, of Sarnia, Berkshire, and Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs A. Miles, of Fawley, Hampshire.
Mr L.D. Harvey Wood and Miss C.E. Hay-Jones
The engagement is announced between Laurence, son of Mr and Mrs Andrew Harvey Wood, of Milsand, Gloucestershire, and Claire, daughter of Dr and Mrs Trevor Hay-Jones, of Painswick, Gloucestershire.
Mr M.C. Miller and Miss L. Lowell
The engagement is announced between Matthew, son of Mr and Mrs Graham Miller, of Arundel, West Sussex, and Laura, daughter of the late Israel Calkowitz and the late Lady Caroline Blackwood.
Mr A. Nahmany and Miss V. Apple
The engagement is announced between Alain, son of M and Mrs David Nahmany, of Marseilles, France, and Victoria, daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Apple, of Cleveleys, Lancashire.
Mr J.P. O'Hara and Miss C.J. Plozman
The engagement is announced between Joseph, eldest son of Mr James O'Hara and Mrs Renee O'Hara, both of London, and Caroline Jane, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Gary Plozman, of Hong Kong.
Mr J.M.C. Smith and Miss S.J.O. Whitford
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, younger son of Mr and Mrs Nigel Stoughton, of Chelsea, London, and Zoe, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Milton Brown, of Ilton, West Glamorgan.
Marriage
Mr M.F. Hume and Miss S.D. Haffner
The marriage took place on Saturday, January 16, 1999, in Manhattan, New York City, between Mr and Mrs Leslie Hume, of Hampton, New York, and Miss S.D. Haffner, daughter of Mr Craig Haffner and his wife Robin Haffner, of Los Angeles, California.

Forces appointments

ROYAL AIR FORCE
Air Commodore P. Liddell to be Air Officer Communications, Information Systems and Support Services, Headquarters Logistics Command in the rank of air vice-marshal on January 22 in succession to Air Vice-Marshal B. C. McCallum.
Air Commodore
P. Whalley, HQ STC, 41.99; N. D. Maddox, HQ 148 GP, 8.1.99; P. B. Walker, MOD, 15.1.99; A. E. Neal, RAF PMA, 18.1.99; A. D. Sweetman, JSCSC Bracknell, 18.1.99.
Group Captain
W. S. Rooms, MOD (P), 41.99; K. J. L. Sherin, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; K. J. Patten, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; P. J. Hilling, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; D. N. Case, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; P. Whalley, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; D. C. Vass, RCDS 99, 6.1.99; D. N. Case, RAF Presentation Team, 8.1.99; D. H. Miles-Smith, HQ Aircom, 8.1.99; C. B. Montague, HQ STC, 11.1.99; A. F. P. Desai, RAF Wincobury, 18.1.99; P. W. D. Eddock, RAF Cottesby, 18.1.99; N. W. Cowan, HQ STC, 22.1.99.
Gray's Inn
The following have been elected Masters of the Bench of Gray's Inn: Mr Brian John Barker, QC; Mr Peter William Birks, QC; Mr Terence Michael Elkan, QC; Mr Eberhard, QC, and Mr Colin Reese, QC.
The following have been elected Honorary Masters of the Bench: Mr Henry Lin, Chief Justice; Mr Stephen Ngunjiri, Judge Stephen Schwebel, Professor Dr Guido Alpa, Professor Dr Rita Limberg, the Hon Mrs Lavina Wallop and Sir Frederick Girvan.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS

WARD - On 9th January 1999, to Caroline (née Osborne) and Stephen, a son, Richard Stephen.

WISLEY - On January 15th 1999 to Claire and Mark, a daughter, Charlotte Trengrove, a brother for Isabel and Hugh.

YAKOVENKO - On January 8th at The Portland Hospital to Claudia Hengst and Alexander Yakovenko, a son, Christian.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

JESSOP-COLSON - Charles and Mary on January 21st 1929 at St. Mary's, Berrow, Somerset.

MATTHEWS-WILCOX - On January 21st 1929 at St. Mary's Church, Finchley, London N3, George Walter to Betty, still in the Hampstead Garden Suburb.

DEATHS

BLANE - Mary Jane Warren peacefully on 19th January 1999 at Annesbury Abbey aged 88. During illness at Ezzar; beloved wife of Ezzar; devoted mother to Lucy and Katherine. Funeral Service, Salisbury Crematorium at 11.40 am on Thursday 28th January 1999. Family flowers only. Funeral Directors Gerald W. Burden 01980 623262.

BOYD - Ann (née Hopkins), on 14th January 1999 in Essex; beloved wife of Robin, beloved friend of many. Cremation. No flowers, but donations, if desired, direct to any heart or cancer charity.

DEATHS

BRADSHAW - Dr Claude, formerly of Pilton, Salisbury, died 19th January 1999. Beloved husband of Diana for 53 years. Loving father of Andrew, Michael and Robert. Father-in-law of Rachel and caring grandfather of Thomas and Nicholas. Donations to his memory to Leukaemia Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

CANNISTON-POTTS - Mary Rosalind (Daisy) peacefully at Oakcroft House, West Byfleet, aged 93 on January 18th 1999, wife of the late Alec and much loved mother of Caroline. Private cremation. Thanksgiving Service on Friday 26th January at 12 noon at St. Mary's Church, Otford, Kent. No flowers. Donations to the National Cancer Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

COTTER - On January 18th 1999, Mary, aged 93 years, widow of Pat Cotter, killed in action 1943, mother of Brian and John. Funeral service on Friday 26th January at 12 noon at St. Mary's Church, Otford, Kent. No flowers. Donations to the National Cancer Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

HALSTEAD - Christopher John MA PhD (Cambridge), aged 58, (nursed 34 years) passed peacefully away on Tuesday 18th January at The Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. He was a devoted father and grandfather. Funeral service on Thursday 28th January at 11 am at St. Mary's Church, Otford, Kent. No flowers. Donations to the National Cancer Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

KARLIS - On 19th January 1999, suddenly, Mary, aged 51. Most beloved wife of John, mother of Nicholas and Stephen. Father-in-law and grandfather. Funeral service on Thursday 28th January at 11 am at St. Mary's Church, Otford, Kent. No flowers. Donations to the National Cancer Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

KNOX - Angel Stuart, aged 78. Retired physiotherapist. Suddenly on 18th January 1999 after a short illness in the Royal United Hospital, Bath. Youngest daughter of the late Sir Harold and Ursula Knox, much loved sister and great-grandmother. Services at Bath Abbey on Tuesday 26th January at 12 noon. Family flowers only. Donations to the Royal National Cancer Campaign. All enquiries to J.B. Hall Funeral Directors, Wokingham, Tel: 0118 9790023.

DEATHS

DUNCAN - Mary Jane, on 19th January at the Royal Berkshire Hospital after a short illness. Beloved wife of Andrew, mother and great-grandmother of James, Seamus and Isabel. Very much loved by all her family. Private cremation. Thanksgiving Service on Monday 22nd January at 11.30 am at St. Mary's Church, Otford, Kent. No flowers. Donations to the National Cancer Research Fund would be appreciated. c/o The Funeral & Co Ltd, 122 Station Road, Birmingham B17 9LS. 0121 427 2233.

HARRISON - Frank Vernon, Capt RN, died on Monday 18th January 1999 in the 10th and 11th Regiments, aged 87. Beloved husband of Margaret and much loved father of John, David, Peter and Mark. Family flowers only please but donations for Berley Milne Fund can be given at the church or sent to W. Smith & Sons, Funeral Directors, 3A Ryeview Parade, Ringwood Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH23 2NU.

MCCORMICK - Douglas Roy, peacefully on 18th January 1999, aged 89 years, beloved husband of Pat, dear father of Simon and Christopher, father-in-law of Rosemary and Margaret. Family flowers only please but donations for Berley Milne Fund can be given at the church or sent to W. Smith & Sons, Funeral Directors, 3A Ryeview Parade, Ringwood Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH23 2NU.

MURPHY - Honor, daughter of Arthur Stanley Byrne, 10th Viscountess of Down, passed peacefully away on 17th January, aged 88. Funeral service to be held at Christ Church, 100 Wood Street, Chelsea at 11 am on Wednesday 27th January. Family flowers only.

PARSONS - Dr Fred, 1922 to 1998, formerly of University College, London. Beloved husband of Rita, died January 18th. Cremation at Mortlake on January 22nd at 11.30 am. Donations to British Heart Foundation.

PECK - Frances Eleanor MBE, peacefully 14th January at Westwood Hall Nursing Home, Wirral. Funeral service on 22nd January at 10.45 am. Please contact back for further details. Telephone 01491 64002 for further details.

POWELL - F.P. (Paul), West Malling, Kent died 19th January 1999 after a very short illness. Greatly loved and missed by family and friends.

ROBERTSON - Donald Keith, aged 91 formerly of London, died peacefully on January 18th after a long illness borne with bravery and courage. Beloved husband of Lena, much loved father and grandfather. Will be greatly missed by family and friends. Funeral at Westwood Hall, 28th January 20th at 2pm. Family flowers only please. Donations to the Alastair Disease Society, c/o Mr Harold F. Miles, Funeral Director, 30 South Cadbury, BA22 7BS. Telephone 01491 440987.

ROSEHEAD - On 17th January 1999, Mrs. David Rosehead, peacefully after a short illness. Devoted and beloved husband of Linda. He will be greatly missed by all his friends and family. Funeral at Mortlake on January 22nd at 11.30 am. Donations to British Heart Foundation.

SCOTT - John, aged 88 years, died peacefully on 18th January 1999. Beloved husband of Margaret and father of Barbara and Paul. Funeral at Mortlake on January 22nd at 11.30 am. Donations to British Heart Foundation.

WATSON - Frances Venger (née Costello) on January 17th at the Hospital. Beloved wife of David. Loved wife of Lawrence Venger and mother of Anthony, Gregory and Anthony. Burial at Mortlake on January 22nd at 11.30 am. Donations to British Heart Foundation.

WILLIAMS - Dr George, aged 88 years, died peacefully on 18th January 1999. Beloved husband of Margaret. Funeral at Mortlake on January 22nd at 11.30 am. Donations to British Heart Foundation.

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To place death notices, acknowledgements or notices please call 0171 680 6880

0171 432

OBITUARIES

DENNIS VAN THAL

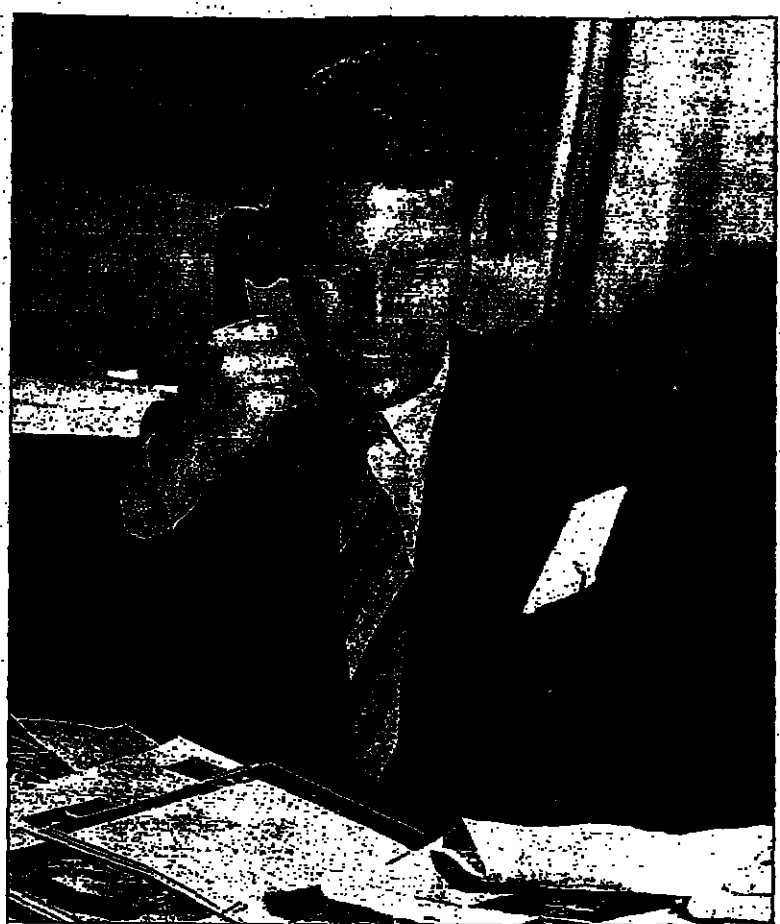
Dennis van Thal, theatrical agent and co-founder of the London Management agency, died at the actors' retirement home, Denville Hall, on January 12 aged 89. He was born on June 4, 1909.

THE career of Dennis van Thal in the world of the stage and of the cinema was one of the longest and most influential of recent times. For nearly 50 years his name — first as a casting director, then as a producer and finally as a theatrical agent — was in itself almost a guarantee of quality. He had the allegiance of some of the biggest stars in the business, not just as clients but as close friends.

Those meeting him for the first time were often slightly intimidated by his unassuming and casual conversational references to figures such as Sir Michael Balcon, Sir Alec Guinness, Franco Zeffirelli, Dirk Bogarde, Roger Moore and Fred Zinnemann — all perhaps in the same sentence. Yet, far from being a name-dropper, van Thal was just recounting memories from his working life — and invariably praising his colleagues' talents with the huge enthusiasm that was his trademark.

Dennis van Thal was born in London of Dutch parents. His first love was music, and from an early age he not only played the piano but arranged music and composed songs. After graduating from University College London, he sought work in the theatre. A chance meeting with the legendary impresario André Charlot led to his being engaged as an arranger and later a musical director for many of the Charlot revues of the 1920s. It was during this period of the Bright Young Things that he met and became friends with such toasts of the town as Noël Coward and Beatrice Lillie.

When, public taste in the theatre changed, partly as a result of the Depression, van Thal found himself drawn to the then flourishing British cinema industry. So distinguished was his theatrical record that he landed the



plum job of casting director at Denham Studios, for that flamboyant and larger-than-life Hungarian Sir Alexander Korda.

During his time working for Korda's London Films he played his part in making some classic British movies. Among those for which he did the casting were *The Four Feathers* (1939), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940), *The Fallen Idol* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1949). As well as being acutely sensitive to public taste, he had a keen

eye for up-and-coming talent, and claimed to have discovered both Jean Simmons and Stephen Boyd.

During the Second World War he served in the Navy, afterwards returning to Denham. In 1957 he changed his role from casting director to producer, and was invited by Sir Michael Balcon to join him at Ealing Studios to work for Brynston Films. The heyday of the Ealing comedies was over, but Brynston still managed to turn out what were termed "peculiarly English films" — the best example being the intensely patriotic *Dunkirk* (1958). During this period van Thal came into contact with cameramen such as Freddie Young and Ossie Morris, both of whom he was later to represent.

In 1959 he met the young casting director for MGM British, a woman named Jean Diamond. With his long experience in films, van Thal decided to establish a theatrical agency. They formed a partnership and their offices in Upper Brook Street opened for business — with a fine sense of humour — on April 1, 1959. There was no peeling paint on the walls and no dusty staircase to climb; even the address was a far cry from the run of theatrical agents' dingy offices in Charing Cross Road and St Martin's Lane.

The name London Management became synonymous with talent among performers, directors and designers. Its actors included Roger Moore and Terry Thomas, to say nothing of three theatrical knights — Sir Dirk Bogarde, Sir Alec Guinness and Sir Robert Helpmann. From the world of film direction came such renowned clients as Fred Zinnemann, Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Powell, and the roll-call of designers included Julia Trevelyan Oman, Hildegard Becker and Tom Rand.

Part of van Thal's success lay in his underlying modesty and genuine concern for his clients. He was a naturally astute businessman, and as Ossie Morris once remarked: "People like me didn't understand contracts and finance — we just let Dennis sort it out."

Van Thal continued working at his agency's Mayfair offices until his 80th birthday, a celebration marked quietly with colleagues in the office. He never courted the limelight, but his name nevertheless carried enormous weight throughout showbusiness.

Last year van Thal moved into Denville Hall, the Actors' Benevolent Fund's retirement home in Northwood, Middlesex, where he died. He married Mary Shoppee in 1940. She predeceased him.

KATHLEEN BASFORD

Kathleen Basford, author of *The Green Man*, died on December 20 aged 82. She was born on September 6, 1916.



KATHLEEN BASFORD was the woman responsible for a resurgence of interest in the Green Man, the medieval face enmeshed in leaves which stares down from hundreds of churches across Europe. Her exhaustive research in the 1960s and 1970s culminated in her authoritative book *The Green Man* (1978), which in turn has led to new interpretations by artists in many media, including, perhaps most notably, John Piper's paintings.

The Green Man is probably the most common motif in sculpture of the Middle Ages, occurring on bosses, capitals, misericords and elsewhere in half of the medieval churches in England. Yet no one knows for sure what he signifies.

Basford wrote that she "could not begin to evaluate" the significance of the details, and instead urged people to "go and look respectfully and very carefully at examples individually and to beware of projecting interpretations."

The author of a more recent study praises her work as "impeccably researched and without any of the wilder references to crop circles, ley lines or 'Celtic' subjects whom many have tried to link to the Green Man." But she did have her own interpretation, influenced by modern scientific and ecological fears: that the Green Man symbolises the unity of man and nature, and saw him as a warning "that without leaves — a cover of vegetation over the face of the earth — there will be nothing but drought, famine, death and ruin."

Born in Grantham, into a family with roots in farming in the Fens, Kathleen North was taught about the rich Lincolnshire plant life by a devoted nursemaid, and knew by the age of six that this would be a lifelong passion.

She went to school at Harrogate College, where biology was not taught but there was the compensation of a good education in art. She then studied botanical drawing at Nottingham Art School. She

Abbey in Yorkshire that Basford spotted the Green Man carved into the keystone on one of the windows of the chapel of the nine altars. This provoked her to ask innumerable questions, and to devote her spare time over several years to answering them. She travelled around Britain and continental Europe, examining countless leaf masks and foliate heads, tracking down historical data, digging deep into ancient religious beliefs, tracing the origins and development of the Green Man as far afield as Istanbul.

She presented a paper to the Folklore Society at Lancaster University in 1973, and was then invited to expand it into a book. As well as delving into folklore and art and architectural history, she became an expert photographer, processing her own negatives at home. *The Green Man*, the first monograph on the subject in any language, is illustrated with a hundred of her own photographs. (It was reissued in paperback last year.)

In it, Basford traces the imp's descent from wood gods and Roman art of the 1st century, making the transition from pagan to Christian art at Trier cathedral in the 6th century. Because he typically wears a grim expression and hides in the undergrowth — seemingly with malevolent intent — she rejected the idea that the Green Man represents the spirit of natural renewal, and speculated instead that he is a demon, perhaps even the devil himself. And yet, "in following his trail, we come to some of the most beautiful places on earth — the churches and cathedrals of the Middle Ages. It is, indeed, a very strange demon that can lead us to such heavenly vistas."

Kathleen Basford went on to take up crochet, experimenting boldly with colours. She helped to evolve the international diploma in crochet, and wrote *The Appeal of Crochet* (with Pauline Turner).

Her own and her husband's ill-health curtailed her activities in later life, but as recently as last May she took part in a BBC radio programme on the Green Man. She is survived by her daughter and two sons.

PROFESSOR QIAN ZHONGSHU

Professor Qian Zhongshu (Ch'ien Chun-shu), Chinese writer and scholar, died on December 19 aged 88. He was born on November 10, 1910.

QIAN ZHONGSHU was one of the most important Chinese writers and critics of the century. Having spent time at Oxford in the 1930s, he had a remarkable knowledge of English literature, and he was not only a purveyor of style in his essays, and for a satirical novel.

Born in Wuxi, in the Jiangsu Province of China, Qian was a boy wonder, noted for his photographic memory, a keen critical appreciation for the arts and letters, and for his application. He was also blessed with a scholarly family background. His father, Qian Jibo (1887-1957), was a well-known literary historian and university professor.

At school he excelled in English but did poorly in mathematics. He went on to study English language and literature at the National Tsinghua University where he met Yang Jiang, and they married in 1935.

After graduating from Tsinghua in 1933, Qian taught English at the Guang Hua University in Shanghai. In 1935, he was awarded a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship, and went to Exeter College, Oxford, again reading English literature. According to his friends and contemporaries at Oxford, Qian read more thrillers and detective stories than was healthy for a student devoted to serious literary research, and as a result he failed the preliminary examination in English palaeography and had to sit for it a second time. He did, however, develop an interest in a range of Western philosophers and writers including Hegel and Proust, about whom he later wrote. He received his Oxford BLitt in 1937 with a thesis on China in 17th and 18th-century English literature. The Queen quoted passages from it in a speech on her state visit to China in 1986.

Back in China, Qian taught at various universities, and worked as an editor on journals including *The China Critic*, *Tsinghua Weekly*, and the *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography*. A collection of his essays entitled *Marginalia* in 1933, Qian taught

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manner, centring on the journey from hope through frustration to defeat of a failed student returning to China from Europe after buying a degree certificate from America by post and being offered an appointment at a newly established university. It showed Qian to be a formidable satirist, daring to comment on contemporary Chinese society through his commentary on the Chinese pseudo-intellectuals, on courtship and marriage, and on the effect of war on daily life. It was translated into Czech, French, German, Japanese and Russian as well as English. It was also later televised.

Moving to Beijing, Qian and his wife became research fellows in the Institute of Foreign Literature of the Academia Sinica. He later transferred to the Institute of Chinese Literature, and when the Academy of Social Sciences was founded in 1952 he became senior fellow in its Institute of Literature.

In 1953 he published the *Annotated Selection of Song Poetry*, a widely acclaimed anthology of poetry from the Song Dynasty. He later headed a team of scholars responsible for the writing of the Tang and Song sections of a history of Chinese literature.

During Mao's Cultural Revolution, Qian and his wife were both sent to labour camps. Their experiences were later described in *Yang Jiang's Six Chapters from My Life* "Down-under", published in 1981 (and in English in 1984). After Mao's death in 1976, Qian was rehabilitated and visited the United States, Italy and Japan. In 1979 he published a book containing four studies of Chinese painting, Chinese poetry and the art of translation.

That year also saw his most significant work, *On Ideas and Concepts*, a monumental work of classical and comparative philology in four volumes, covering a vast territory and written with an assured grasp of the Western classics of philosophy, literature and literary criticism. This work was written in a style even more elegant and archaic than that of *On the Art of Poetry*, and people were amazed that anyone could still write in this traditional way. (An English translation of 65 chapters was published by Harvard last year under the title *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters*.)

Thereafter Qian published only a few essays in journals and newspapers, but he became the subject of intense scholarly and popular attention. Nevertheless, he kept a low public profile and was the least photographed modern Chinese writer and scholar. He did, however, become the vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1982, and was elected a non-parliamentary member of the standing committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1987.

He suffered a prolonged illness before his death, and had been in hospital for four years. When he died, the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, made a personal phone call to his widow, Professor Yang Jiang (Yang Chiang), and his death has been marked at universities in both China and America.

SIR JAMES WHITAKER, Bt

Sir James Whitaker, OBE, 3rd Baronet, former vice-chairman of the Halifax Building Society, died at his Nottinghamshire home on January 13 aged 73. He was born on July 27, 1925.



JAMES WHITAKER was a fortunate man and the very first to admit it. He inherited at the age of 32 a baronetcy, two substantial properties, one in Nottinghamshire and the other in Perthshire, and he was quietly determined to give back to the world in which he grew up something more than he had been given.

James Herbert Ingham Whitaker was the eldest of the three sons of Major-General Sir John Whitaker. Educated at Eton, he joined the Coldstream Guards in 1944, served in North-West Europe and subsequently became ADC in Cairo to General Sir Charles Allfrey. There he met and in 1948 married Marybeth Clark, the widow of a fellow Army officer, and thus began a partnership of shared interests which lasted fifty years and ended only with her death last Christmas Day.

Demobilised in 1947, Whitaker returned to Nottinghamshire and to learning about farming. He did so very productively. When his father died in 1957, the estate was heavily burdened with death duties. In a relatively short period a mixture of grinding hard work and shrewdly imaginative risk-taking enabled the debts to be cleared, and the way was then open for other activities.

He became a founding governor, vice-chairman and chairman, a frequent visitor, a generous benefactor, a determined fundraiser and a valued source of wisdom and advice. In 1993, during a visit by the Queen, he and Marybeth were appointed honorary fellows of the college.

Another organisation that benefited a great deal from his efforts on its behalf was the Halifax Building Society, of which he was a director for thirty years and a vice-chairman for twenty. In particular, he familiarised himself with the work of managers and senior staff in branches throughout the country. His visits were welcome and his judgment was often valuable. At a time in the 1970s when the Halifax, with its Yorkshire headquarters, was keen to raise its profile in London he was the chief advocate and first chairman of a London advisory board. In 1960-70 he was also High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire.

Yet those who knew Whitaker will remember him not for the appointments he held but for the person he was. His circle of close friends was deliberately not large, but his loyalty to those within it was absolute. His interests were intensely personal, however varied they might seem — farming, the stock exchange, shooting, and, especially, anything that affected his friends. He loved the continuity of the past but he was a risk-taker. There was a glint in his eye if there was a gamble in sight (at bridge his bidding was breathtakingly bold). In Elizabethan days he would have been a merchant adventurer; later he would have been a victim of the South Sea Bubble. And if the gold that was suspected had been found beneath his beloved Perthshire estate of Auchnafree, there is no telling whether the gold or the grouse would have taken priority.

He is survived by a daughter and by his son, who becomes the 4th baronet.

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PERSONAL COLUMN

FOR SALE

A REGENCY 17th Century Original, Chiswick, 1200 sq ft, 12 rooms, 1000 sq ft garden, 1000 sq ft garage, 1000 sq ft driveway, 1000 sq ft parking, 1000 sq ft storage, 1000 sq ft workshop, 1000 sq ft office, 1000 sq ft kitchen, 1000 sq ft living, 1000 sq ft dining, 1000 sq ft bedroom, 1000 sq ft bathroom, 1000 sq ft terrace, 1000 sq ft patio, 1000 sq ft lawn, 1000 sq ft garden, 1000 sq ft driveway, 1000 sq ft parking, 1000 sq ft storage, 1000 sq ft workshop, 1000 sq ft office, 1000 sq ft kitchen, 1000 sq ft living, 1000 sq ft dining, 1000 sq ft bedroom, 1000 sq ft bathroom, 1000 sq ft terrace, 1000 sq ft patio, 1000 sq ft lawn, 1000 sq ft garden, 1000 sq ft driveway, 1000 sq ft parking, 1000 sq ft storage, 1000 sq ft workshop, 1000 sq ft office, 1000 sq ft kitchen, 1000 sq ft living, 1000 sq ft dining, 1000 sq ft bedroom, 1000 sq ft bathroom, 1000 sq ft terrace, 1000 sq ft patio, 1000 sq ft lawn, 1000 sq ft garden, 1000 sq ft driveway, 1000 sq ft parking, 1000 sq ft storage, 1000 sq ft 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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY JANUARY 21 1999

RIM's bid for Mirror backed by Soros millions

By Jason Nisse

GEORGE SOROS, the investor famous for making £1 billion when sterling was forced out of the exchange rate mechanism, is one of the undeclared backers for the £913 million bid for Mirror Group by Regional Independent Media (RIM).

Morgan Grenfell, the German-owned investment bank, have joined with Candover, the venture capital house, to provide £400 million of equity for the potential offer.

The rest of the money is coming from debt, underwritten by Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank that may also put some equity finance into the deal.

Officially RIM, which publishes the Yorkshire Post among other titles, would be making the offer, which will only be put to shareholders if recommended by the Mirror board. However, RIM is valued at only £360 million and does not have the firepower for such a large bid.

RIM would have to refinance Mirror's £500 million of debts, bringing the total cost of the 200p a share offer to more than £1.4 billion.

The structure of the new company will see Candover as the largest shareholder with Soros Fund and DMG putting in at least £100 million each.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDEXES
FTSE 100 6105.8 (+78.0)
Yield 2.85%
FTSE All Share 2780.57 (+29.84)
Nikkei 14028.05 (+257.51)
New York Dow Jones 9436.84 (+81.52)
S&P Composite 1289.38 (+17.38)

US RATE
Federal Funds 4.75% (4.75%)
Long bond 5.21% (5.14%)
Yield 5.21% (5.14%)

LONDON MONEY
3-mth market 5.4% (5.4%)
Life long gilt 119.53 (119.31)

STERLING
New York 1.5472* (1.5583)

London 1.5474 (1.5585)
S 1.4521 (1.4530)
SF 2.2268 (2.2211)
Yen 186.96 (186.55)
S index 104.3 (104.3)

US DOLLAR
London 1.1675* (1.1617)
SF 113.65* (113.44)
Yen 104.3 (104.3)

Tokyo close Yen 113.38

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent 15-day (Apr) \$10.75 (\$10.80)

GOLD
London close \$286.15 (\$285.75)

Exchange rates Page 28
* denotes midday trading prices

Fed chief fears for recovery of stock markets

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK AND JANET BUSH

ALAN GREENSPAN, the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, yesterday gave warning that the strong recovery in stock markets may not be sustainable.

Addressing investors' enthusiasm for stocks in technology companies, many of which have yet to make a profit, Mr Greenspan said he was concerned about share prices, given the uncertain outlook for earnings growth.

In his annual State of the Economy address before Congress, Mr Greenspan also challenged President Clinton's proposal under which \$675 billion of US social security money would be shifted into stock market funds managed by Wall Street.

Although Mr Greenspan said he supported the idea of putting 62 per cent of the budget surplus into social security cash reserves, he said the plan to direct about a quarter of this money into stocks could damage the economy. He feared that the money would not be insulated from political interests, a view echoed by Wall Street professionals.

He said that the current level of share prices "would appear to envision substantially greater growth of profits than has been experienced of late". He also said that, while markets had undoubtedly stabilised significantly, "they remain fragile, as the repercussions of the recent Brazilian devaluation attest".

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Wall Street was predisposed towards optimism yesterday after a robustly delivered State of the Union address by President Clinton on Tuesday night and a stunning set of results from Microsoft, which sent information technology stocks to even dizzy heights.

In London, the wave of enthusiasm for information technology stocks dominated the market once again, and was largely responsible for the FTSE 100 index closing 78 points higher at 6,105.6.

Wall Street also challenged President Clinton's proposals. Michael Jones, a managing director at Mentor Investment Group, said: "The concept that long-term liabilities should have the best-performing long-term assets — namely stocks — is a good one. But the concept of the Government investing the money is anathema. The moment you have the Government investing, you'll have each senator pushing his or her pet projects. That could kill the project."

Commentary, page 29



Alan Greenspan challenged President Clinton's proposal to put social security money into shares

High prices blamed for sharp fall in retail sales

By Janet Bush, Economics Editor

HIGH street sales fell sharply in December with the City blaming retailers for raising their prices to levels unacceptable to consumers.

Sales volumes fell by 0.9 per cent compared with November, giving a year-on-year rise of only 0.7 per cent, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics.

This performance was much weaker than the small gain that the City had been expecting but was seen as consistent with Tuesday's news of an upward blip in underlying inflation last month.

Jonathan Lynes, economist at HSBC, said that retailers, encouraged by stronger sales in November, had apparently kept prices high in the first few weeks of December, leading to disappointing sales. He said that retailers would then have been forced to discount, good news for inflation in January.

Together with the minutes of the January meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee, which yesterday showed a seven to two majority in favour of the 0.25 per cent cut in base rates that resulted, the City concluded that another lowering in rates may now be on the cards.

The minutes showed that DeAnne Julius had argued for a 0.50 per cent cut in rates while Ian Plenderleith of the Bank of England had argued for rates to remain unchanged. However, he was not opposed to lower rates per se, acknowledging that if the economic data warranted it rates could be cut by a larger amount in February.

Much will depend on tomorrow's first estimate of fourth-quarter gross domestic product. Together with yesterday's weak sales figures, a fall in GDP would mean that it is "game-on for a rate cut" in February, according to Adam Law, of Barclays Capital.

Supporting the view that December's retail sales were weak because they were overpriced rather than because consumers are drawing in their horns was the latest survey of consumer confidence published yesterday by GfK for the European Commission and covering January.

This showed that, although confidence about the general economic outlook remained low and fears of unemployment high, optimism about personal finances rebounded sharply in January to a record high. In addition, GfK's quarterly business confidence barometer showed a sharp increase in the number of managing directors who expect to employ more people this year.

GfK said its survey results were similar to those recorded in 1985/86 when the economy suffered a slowdown but not a full-scale recession.

Standby for the virtual index

By Chris Ayres

COMPANIES with large profits need not apply. FTSE International, the organiser of Britain's stock indices, is to create an elite sub-sector for the burgeoning collection of Internet companies, where profits will be strictly virtual.

Plans to create the sub-sector have been revealed amid an Internet gold-rush that has seen one company, Internet games producer On-Line, experience a 2,088 per cent share price rise over the past two weeks — from 124p to 2734p.

Experts predict that the sub-sector, to be launched in April, will encourage thousands of private investors to make wild

punts on obscure Internet stocks. In the hope that they will one day become the next Yahoo!, the loss-making US Internet company that is now valued at more than \$30 billion (£18 billion).

However, only companies that make most of their revenues from the Internet will be allowed in. This excludes many retail retailers such as Dixons and WH Smith.

Five companies are likely to be initially included in the sub-sector: Easynet, Internet Technology Group, Netcall, Voss Net and Gresham Computing.

Commentary, page 29

Sears in fresh talks with JIL

By Sarah Cunningham, Retail Correspondent

PHILIP GREEN and Aidan Barclay were last night locked in talks with the board of Sears about raising their 340p per share bid for the retail group by up to 15p.

In return, the Sears directors, led by Sir Bob Reid, chairman, which rejected a £519 million bid last week, would reverse their position and recommend that shareholders accept the higher bid.

The bid vehicle is January Investments (JIL), set up by Mr Green and David and Frederick Barclay, the property and media tycoons. Aidan Barclay, the son of David, is chairman of JIL.

The bid is backed by a £115 million loan from Bank of Scotland, and a further £300 million from a banking syndicate led by BankBoston Robertson Stephens. The rest of the funding will come from £125 million loan from the Barclay Brothers and Mr Green's wife, Christina.

Mr Green is chief executive of JIL. Its non-executive directors are Tom Hunter, the retail millionaire and an associate of Mr Green, and Philip Peters and Michael Seal, two associates of the Barclay brothers.

Green message, page 28
Commentary, page 29

MMC to investigate CityFlyer deal

By Adam Jones

BRITISH AIRWAYS, already reeling from a fall in first class and business sales, suffered another blow yesterday when its purchase of CityFlyer Express was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. By Stephen Byers, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The £75 million deal would have left BA with 44 per cent of all take-off and landing slots at Gatwick, and prompted angry protests from Virgin Atlantic.

CityFlyer is a short-haul BA franchisee and is the second-biggest user of Gatwick, with 12 per cent of all slots, compared with BA's 32 per cent. Its planes are decorated with the BA livery and its staff wear BA uniforms.

The existing link between the two companies was thought to have been an argument against an MMC referral. A BA spokeswoman said: "While we are disappointed with the referral to the MMC, we are confident that we will be able to persuade them that the deal should be approved."

The MMC will make its report by April 28. The referral delays a £30 million payout to CityFlyer staff, who own 40 per cent of the company. The other 60 per cent is owned by venture capitalists, including Mercury Asset Management.

Virgin had also wanted to buy CityFlyer. Richard Branson claimed he was not given a fair chance of bidding, but BA and CityFlyer denied this.

A Virgin spokesman said yesterday: "We stand ready and willing to buy CityFlyer. We need to expand the number of slots we have at Gatwick."

He said Virgin was surprised that the deal was struck in the first place. "People are not prepared to tolerate this kind of concentration of market share at airports any more."

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Byers referred BA's bid

Sears investors receive catalogue of failure



Reid: criticised in document

THE message from Aidan Barclay and Philip Green to Sears's investors is a simple one: "£519 million in cash requires no explanation."

But just in case any shareholders in the ailing retail group need a bit more persuading, the chairman and the chief executive of January Investments, the company set up to bid for Sears, go for the hard sell and give a long list of reasons why its 340p cash per share should be accepted.

The offer document, which is being sent to shareholders, pulls no punches on why they

should not allow themselves to be swayed into rejecting the bid by the current management.

According to the document, Sears's management are responsible for a catalogue of failures. These include failed attempts to sell or demerge Freemans, the home shopping business, and a failure to realise value from the Selfridges demerger. "Do shareholders consider this mildly disappointing?" is the pointed question.

It describes the recent history of Freemans as "a catalogue of disasters", and the defunct British Shoe Corporation (part of which was sold to Mr Green) as having "two left feet". Selfridges — the department store company — is described as "once the jewel in the crown, now a property play".

The document also attacks Sir Bob Reid, chairman of Sears, pointing out that he is also chairman of British Petroleum Petroleum Syndicate, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Scotland, non-executive director of Sun Life Assurance Co of Canada, non-executive director of Siemens and chancellor of Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

It points out that since the departure of Liam Strong in April 1997, Sir Bob has effectively been stand-in chief executive for the group.

"After years of presiding over 'the incredible shrinking company', the management, which has overseen a series of humiliating losses on disposals, redundancies and failed re-organisations, is now advising you, the shareholders, to reject the certainty of a full cash offer in the current climate of retail uncertainty."

These criticisms of Sears will be familiar territory for many shareholders, who have watched the value of the company diminish dramatically in recent years as assets have been sold off.

But the final argument used by the bidders in the document, and perhaps the most persuasive one, is that Phillips & Drew, the largest shareholder with more than 22 per cent, agreed to sell its stake as soon as the offer was made unconditional.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM

Comcast to sell its mobile phone arm

COMCAST, the US television company, has agreed to sell its cellular telephone subsidiary to SBC Communications, the regional telephone company, in a deal worth about \$1.7 billion (£1 billion). The transaction, which includes \$400 million in cash and SBC's assumption of about \$1.3 billion of Comcast debt, follows Vodafone's agreement to acquire AirTouch Communications, the US mobile phone giant, for about \$66.5 billion.

Comcast Cellular operates around Philadelphia, New Jersey and Delaware. SBC, which also has a pending agreement to buy Ameritech, the telecoms company, for \$61 billion, currently operates cellular services under the Cellular One brand in the Washington-Baltimore area, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and upstate New York.

CGU syndicate move

CGU is to become the first composite insurer to set up a syndicate underwriting risks at Lloyd's, the insurance market. It is transferring its London marine business from the Institute of London Underwriters to Lloyd's by setting up a syndicate wholly capitalised by CGU and managed by the Marlborough Underwriting Agency. It currently owns 51 per cent of Marlborough, but the stake will be lifted to 60 per cent as part of the deal. The move further underlines the fundamental changes taking place at Lloyd's and the increasing influence of so-called corporate capital at the expense of names.

Hammerson buy

HAMMERSON, the property group, has acquired two adjacent office buildings in Docklands, London, for a total of £76.9 million. Harbour Exchange One and Two, known as Exchange Tower, have a combined annual rental income of £5 million, with tenants including Cable & Wireless and BT. Roger Spinney, Hammerson's chief executive, said: "As a result of its increasing critical mass, improving access, including progress on the Jubilee Line, and the enhanced perceptions of investors and occupiers, we anticipate that this area of the Docklands will perform well against other Central London office locations."

Cortecs secures deal

CORTECS, the troubled drug development company, has secured a deal with Merck KGaA, of Germany, to distribute Macrinonin, its capsule to treat osteoporosis, in Spain. Hopes that Macrinonin was close to regulatory approval are much diminished after authorities in Finland asked for more demanding data from Cortecs. To save costs, the company has recently made more than 60 employees redundant, and is closing its London headquarters. Merck will pay Cortecs £500,000, with a further £1 million to follow on if winning Spanish marketing authorisation. The shares fell 3p to 28½p.

United buys into US

UNITED NEWS & MEDIA added to its market research capacity with an agreed offer to buy America's Audits & Surveys Worldwide for \$425 million (about £26 million). United said the deal, which is expected to enhance earnings in the first year, doubles the company's presence in America. The company's enlarged United Information Group subsidiary will have \$240 million in annual revenues. United shares rose 14p to 494½p yesterday.

The New York-based ASW was founded in 1953 by its current chairman Sol Dutka who will continue as chairman.

Milk inquiry extended

THE Government has agreed to extend the Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry into the supply of raw milk by one month, to allow sufficient time for Milk Marque, which controls the supply of about half the raw milk in England and Wales, to check the evidence it gave the inquiry. This is the second time the inquiry has been extended. The MMC was due to report by October 26, but the Government allowed an extension to January 26. The report will now be handed to the Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, on February 26.

Gooch & Housego up

GOOCH & HOUSEGO, the optical components manufacturer, yesterday announced its first annual results since flotation on the Alternative Investment Market in December 1997. The group lifted pre-tax profits to £1.8 million for the year ended September 30, up from £1.6 million last year, on turnover of £7.2 million (£6.7 million). Earnings per share were 7.5p (7.4p) and a final dividend of 1.2p brings the total to 1.7p. Archie Gooch, executive chairman, said: "Developments taking place in the group, including potential acquisitions, leave it well positioned for continued growth and profitability."

NTL and 3Com link

NTL, the cable company bidding for Newcastle United football club, yesterday said it had entered a partnership with 3Com, the US telecoms giant, to give its customers "super-fast" access to the Internet. The service will use cable modems, with NTL claiming that it will be at least twice as fast as any rival service currently available. Pricing will be based on a flat monthly charge. More than 400,000 people are expected to subscribe to the service in the UK by 2002. "We fully expect that cable modems will become hot property for serious Internet users," NTL said.

Abbey calls for more

ABBEY NATIONAL is expanding its general insurance call centre in Liverpool, creating 250 new jobs. The centre, opened in November 1997, employs 250 staff and offers home and motor insurance over the telephone. Mike Freeman, operations manager, said: "We have been very impressed by the quality of local recruits who have a positive attitude to work and a friendly approach, which is essential in direct telephone services."

Clinton in renewed assault on Big Tobacco

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

PRESIDENT CLINTON has exploited America's anti-smoking sentiments and demanded new funds from "Big Tobacco" over billion-dollar healthcare payments.

After US tobacco companies, including BAT, agreed to a \$200 billion (£121 billion) settlement of a suit filed by individual states last year, the Government in Washington will now seek a similar deal.

Tobacco stocks fell sharply in response after enjoying a rally lasting several months. In London, BAT slipped 18p to 639p after rising from 319p since last April. In New York, US tobacco companies, including Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco, fell about 5 per cent.

Mr Clinton made the surprise announcement in his State of the Union speech. The suit is being prepared by the Justice Department to recover the federal costs of treating smoking-related illnesses.

Mr Clinton said: "Smoking has cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Taxpayers shouldn't pay for the cost of lung cancer, emphysema and other smoking-related illness. The tobacco companies should."

A final decision on bringing the case to court has yet to be made but the sum sought by the Government is likely to be at least \$20 billion. The biggest cost to the tobacco companies arising from the suit may be the uncertainty they had hoped to put behind them with the last settlement.

Myron Marlin, a Justice Department official, said: "We have looked at this issue at different times in the past and have been reviewing them

more actively since the failure of the comprehensive tobacco legislation. We came to the decision that there are viable grounds for recovery."

The Government has spent about \$10 billion from its Medicare programme, \$5 billion from Medicaid and close to another \$5 billion from other programmes, such as veterans benefits and the Federal Employees Health Benefits programme, to treat tobacco-related diseases.

Scott Williams, a tobacco industry spokesman, called Mr Clinton's announcement "a blatantly political act", saying the Justice Department had looked at the issue in the past and decided not to act. "The White House continues to choose confrontation over solutions," he said.

Mr Williams said the Government will have a more difficult time arguing its case than the states did, because the Office of the Surgeon General has been filing reports for decades on the dangers of smoking. He said: "The Government cannot claim ignorance to the health risks associated with tobacco use. This is political. This is about money."

Analysts agreed that Mr Clinton's crusade against tobacco may seem political but they gave warning that this would not be much of a defence for the tobacco companies in court. One analyst said: "Big Tobacco may be able to show that the Government knew full well that smoking is bad for you. But that doesn't mean smokers knew as well. And if they got ill, they'll blame the Government, not for telling them."



Euro Disney, which operates the Disneyland Paris theme park, said yesterday that it had enjoyed a 2 per cent rise in first-quarter revenues. In the three

months to December 31, it lifted revenues from £198 million (£139 million) to £203 million. The company described the improvement as "encouraging" in

the run-up to the scheduled opening in March of its new interactive attraction, Honey, I Shrunk the Audience. The shares shed 4p to 794p.

Neutron Jack makes a fortune as GE rockets

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

GE, the US industrial conglomerate whose diverse products range from lightbulbs to locomotives, reported fourth-quarter profits up 14 per cent at the end of a year that saw its shares rise 35 per cent.

The extraordinary gains of the manufacturing behemoth have made Jack Welch, the chief executive, one of America's top earners in 1998. According to a survey out yesterday, Mr Welch saw the seventh biggest share option increase in the US.

The man known as Neutron Jack for his cost-cutting zeal saw the paper value of his options on GE shares rise \$124 million.

GE, which was surpassed by Microsoft as biggest US company by stock market val-

ue late last year, said 1998 revenue broke through the \$100 billion barrier for the first time.

Quarterly profits rose to \$2.67 billion, compared with \$2.35 billion a year ago. Fourth-quarter revenue rose 7.3 per cent to \$28.6 billion from \$26.7 billion.

Looking ahead, the company said it is "well positioned" to report record results in 1999. For the full year, the company posted revenue of \$100.47 billion, up from \$90.84 billion a year earlier. Profits for the year climbed 13 per cent to \$9.3 billion from \$8.2 billion a year ago.

GE has completed \$13.6 billion of a \$17 billion buyback programme. Elsewhere, General Motors' fourth-quarter profits rose 55

per cent as the biggest US car maker bounced back from last summer's nationwide strike and lockout.

Profits climbed from \$1.4 billion to \$2.2 billion, ahead of analysts' expectations. Revenue rose by 8.1 per cent to \$46.37 billion from \$42.90 billion.

Strong vehicle sales and aggressive cost-cutting initiatives powered the earnings increase, GM said, allowing the company to recover quickly from the strike. John Smith, the chairman, said: "We came back strongly following the work stoppage in mid-year, and we intend to keep this momentum going in the future."

GM Europe posted fourth-quarter earnings of \$146 million, compared with \$31 million a year ago.

Banks to be put in spotlight

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

UK BANKS may have to review prices they charge customers after an inquiry into banking practices, to be unveiled by the Treasury next week.

The review, to be led by Don Cruickshank, the Government's millennium bug chief and former telecoms watchdog, will look at all aspects of banking, including mortgages, credit cards and dealings with small businesses.

The banks said yesterday that they welcomed the review, claiming they offered their customers good-value services.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, announced the review in his Pre-Budget Report in November. Initially, it was anticipated that it would focus on small businesses, in a bid to improve productivity, but its remit has been widened to include all aspects of banking.

Mr Cruickshank has been talking to chief executives of UK clearing banks to establish the outline of the inquiry. The industry been attacked recently over its attitude to business borrowers during an economic downturn.

The British Bankers' Association claimed they had nothing to fear from the probe, adding that the UK banks were among the best in Europe.

"We believe the industry is competitive," said the BBA. But it welcomed the government's decision to review the industry, which it said employs 1.5 per cent of the workforce.

First-time buyers cautious

BY SUSAN EMMETT

CAUTIOUS first-time buyers are saving for longer and borrowing a far lower proportion of the price of their home, according to a survey published yesterday.

Figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions show that although first-time buyers are still borrowing about two and a quarter times their income, aver-

age deposits are now nearly 20 per cent compared with only 10 per cent in 1996.

Tighter credit conditions and lenders' reluctance to offer 100 per cent mortgages have contributed to the changes.

A spokeswoman for the CML said: "People are waiting for longer and having more savings behind them before taking that first step. This is a reflection of more caution in the market, which is very dif-

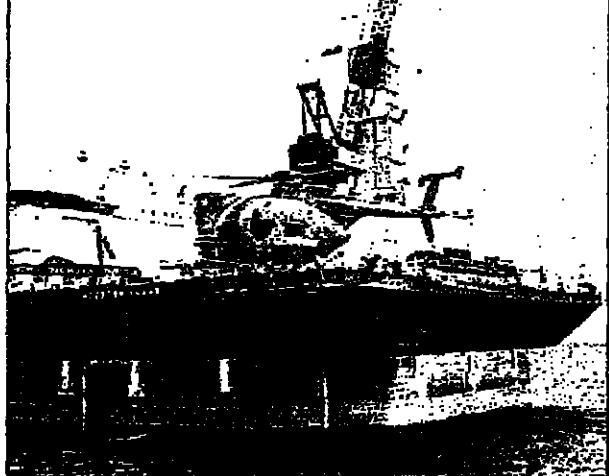
ferent from the mid-1980s, when people were rushing to get on to the property ladder."

The CML said first-time buyers were older with only 19 per cent under 25 years in 1997 compared with 32 per cent in the 1980s.

However, the proportion moving homeowners borrow has remained steady at two-thirds of the value of the property with a mortgage of about twice their income.

Greenpeace hots up Alaskan oil war

BY CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR



Greenpeace filed a suit against the Alaskan government

GREENPEACE is taking legal action in an attempt to stop BP Amoco from developing a \$500 million (£303 million) offshore oilfield in Alaska.

The move threatens to escalate the battle between environmentalists on the one hand and the oil industry and the Alaskan government, both suffering from low oil prices.

The campaign group has filed a suit against the Alaskan government claiming it is illegally granting the oil company permission to begin construction of an "ice road" nine miles into the Beaufort Sea.

Greenpeace has filed for a "stay", effectively an injunction,

to stop work on the Northstar project, the first offshore oil development in the Arctic Ocean. The work has been filed against the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, on the grounds that BP does not have the necessary permits required by federal and state law. BP said Greenpeace's claim was without merit.

The action is part of Greenpeace's campaign to curb greenhouse gas emissions in areas such as Alaska and West of Sheldals in the UK.

Melanie Duchin, a Greenpeace spokesperson in Alaska, said the government had jumped the gun by allowing BP to go ahead before a proper assessment had been made.

BP has already suffered setbacks in the state to its plans to reverse the steady decline in Alaskan oil production. Last week, the company admitted that Northstar production would be delayed by a year due to low oil prices.

BP is under pressure to raise production by an extra 145,000 barrels per day of output from the Eastern North Slope, which includes Northstar. Alaska's government is labouring under a heavy deficit and is keen to open up development of oilfields in previously protected federal lands such as the National Petroleum Reserve and Wildlife Refuge.

Country	Bank	Bank
Australia	Boys	Boys
Austria	Boys	Boys
Belgium	Boys	Boys
Canada	Boys	Boys
Cyprus	Boys	Boys
Denmark	Boys	Boys
France	Boys	Boys
Germany	Boys	Boys
Greece	Boys	Boys
Hong Kong	Boys	Boys
India	Boys	Boys
Indonesia	Boys	Boys
Israel	Boys	Boys
Italy	Boys	Boys
Japan	Boys	Boys
Malaysia	Boys	Boys
Netherlands	Boys	Boys
New Zealand	Boys	Boys
Norway	Boys	Boys
Portugal	Boys	Boys
Spain	Boys	Boys
Sweden	Boys	Boys
Switzerland	Boys	Boys
Taiwan	Boys	Boys
USA	Boys	Boys

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'Internet' stocks can turn to Cinders



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The hallowed chambers in which the committee of the FTSE International conducts its debates could soon be the setting of true pantomime. "This company thinks it's an Internet stock," "Oh no it's not."

"Oh yes it is." Directors will submit themselves to the awful indignities of the Ugly Sisters as they try to squeeze into the glass slipper that would confer instant glamour, and allow them to skip off into the arms of the prince of the investment world.

The new Internet sub-sector of the FTSE will be THE place to be, with sky-high ratings for those allowed over the threshold. But the Federal Reserve's Alan Greenspan is the sort who could wreck the spirit of a Christmas show. Put him in the audience at Peter Pan, and his would be the voice condemning Tinkerbell to death because he did not believe in fairies. Neither does he believe that every company which can claim a slight involvement with the Web is destined for greatness.

The Fed's voice of sanity spoke out yesterday to warn of the irrational exuberance that is now powering a few shares to ludicrous levels. Dioxons and WH Smith may only have been re-designated as Internet stocks in the minds of investors, not yet in the FTSE, but the effect has been to send their shares leaping so that they now sell on multiples way ahead of other stores. Dioxons is

now valued at almost 30 times earnings. Sotheby's had merely to mention that it was launching an Internet auction business for its shares to gain almost 30 per cent on the New York Stock Exchange.

It is Mr Greenspan's role to try to instil a little sanity in markets but his task is not made easier by Bill Gates. When Microsoft can almost double its profits, as it has in the last quarter, it persuades the market that there is a magic way of making money.

There may be, but alas, few can find it. Simply adding on an Internet involvement to an existing business will not transform earnings. Microsoft is an extraordinary business, with innovative products and a carefully crafted dominant position in world markets. The way it has achieved that dominance and held onto it remains the subject of protracted and trust cases in the United States. Whatever the outcome for Mr Gates and his shareholders, his achievements have certainly made it unlikely that any other business, no matter how high tech its products, will be able to build such a powerful position.

But expressing such sentiments is a vain attempt to spoil

the fun. The FTSE changes, creating a new economic grouping, will fuel excitement over the whole information technology sector. Mr Greenspan's very reasonable qualms will do little to deter investors from feeling that they cannot afford not to buy.

But those companies that successfully squeeze into the glass slipper would be well advised to remember what happens when midnight strikes.

Venturing into private territory

The ever-widening gap between the star sectors of the stock market and the rest can only encourage more companies to think about the joys of going private.

Those venture capitalists prepared to consider the long-term potential of companies in unglamorous sectors find themselves besieged by managers in-

creasingly demoralised by their lowly share ratings. A miserable stock price causes multiple injuries to otherwise sound businesses. It prevents the company using paper to make acquisitions, at a time when there are plenty of bargains to be had. Instead, it leaves the company dangerously vulnerable to predators, armed either with stronger paper or with cash but not necessarily with better management. Worse still, a miserable share price clobbers management morale. Apart from the sinking feeling occasioned by a glance at the share price tables, there is the effect on incentive schemes. Managers who are doing their best but see their rewards shrinking because they are linked to share prices tend to become disenchanted.

Investors do not take a sympathetic view on this point. Companies that have raised the question of whether they might rebase share options so as to offer some hope to their staff have

found the response brief and unenthusiastic. Institutions take the view that their pain should be shared.

So dozens of companies in sectors such as engineering and retailing are left with the problem of demotivated managers, their share options worthless and their prospects looking grimmer by the day. That is when they turn to the venture capitalists and start to explore the idea of going private.

Goldsmiths is currently working on a deal with Alchemy. Thorn opted out of the stock market courtesy of Nomura and dozens of others are set to follow. It is not difficult to envisage a scenario in which hundreds of companies from the bottom end of the FTSE chose to make a dignified exit and, if the price were not too silly, many investors would not stand in the way.

As major investors look to build pan-European portfolios, it is only the largest UK stocks that will have a significant following.

The rest may find a more congenial home with investors who can take a longer-term view instead of merely saying that they do.

The venture capitalists will rebrand themselves as private equity funds and, if they prove themselves, may find the institutions handing over some of their cash.

Game plan out of Africa

Bernard Asher was like a chance giving directions yesterday. "Well, I wouldn't be starting from here," was the tenor of his explanation for how badly Lonrho Africa is doing, only nine months after demerging from Lonrho.

It is quite an achievement, delivering losses in your first full year as a quoted company — and a quoted company, remember, which was recapitalised before being sent out into the world on its own. The fine words in the demerger document about Lonrho Africa's prospects are now replaced by carping about the awful state of many of the businesses, the need to pare back and concentrate on what the company is good at, and a moan about Lon-

rho selling its sugar business — a deal struck two years ago.

At least Asher has some locus for blaming the African trader's former parent for its current troubles, since he was never on Lonrho's board. But the operational management of Lonrho Africa have no such excuses. The same people running these businesses now were running them before the demerger (though they argue that, as they had the chance to sell the "overall vision for Africa").

Bernard Asher should be glad these results were not out at the time that Blakeney tried to unseat him in the autumn. Had they been, then a different chairman might be presiding over Lonrho Africa today. And he might be thinking about a few management changes.

Ganging up on Bob

WILL another 15p or so be enough to persuade Sir Bob Reid and his board to succumb to the bid from January? Even the stubborn Sir Bob must be tempted to recommend the offer and avoid an escalation of hostilities into February. With the bank of which he is Deputy Governor funding the opposition, he must be wondering where he can look for support. Sir Norman Tebbit, a non-executive of Sears for 12 years, will surely sympathise with Sir Bob, since his son William is advising January.

Strippers called in at flagging First Leisure

By DOMINIC WALSH

MICHAEL GRADE, the embattled chief executive of First Leisure, has signed up to the Chippendales in a bid to revive the group's flagging nightclub business.

The male strippers are just one of several weapons being used by Mr Grade in an attempt to reverse a slump in the number of clubbers.

In the first ten weeks of the current year, comparable sales from its bars and nightclubs division were down 7 per cent, significantly down on the 2 per cent drop seen in the second half of last year.

Concerns over current trading, and Mr Grade's refusal to elaborate on his recent statement that the group was "in talks on strategic initiatives" with third parties, sent the group's shares almost 10 per

cent lower to 192p — a far cry from the 436p they reached in early summer before the sharp decline in consumer confidence.

Mr Grade said the Chippendales would be used at 17 of First Leisure's 40 dance venues to boost trade in the quieter early part of the week and to "create some excitement".

He is also planning to use the chain's 2.7 million-strong membership database and has appointed a new divisional head to shake things up.

But Mr Grade said the group could do nothing about the economic downturn and its nightclubs and bars business was performing "as well as or as badly as our competitors".

He added: "As soon as confidence returns it will bounce back."

His comments came as First Leisure unveiled a decline in pre-tax profits before non-trading exceptional items from £345 million to £33.3 million in the year to October 31.

The figure for 1997 has been restated to reflect the adoption of various accounting policy changes related to depreciation of assets and goodwill. Earnings per share reached 15.7p (14.8p) and a final dividend of 6.68p makes 9.53p (9.0p).

Nightclubs and bars lifted operating profits by £12 million to £21.9 million, while family entertainment — principally ten-pin bowling — saw a decline from £13.3 million to £12.5 million.

Both divisions suffered from the slump in consumer confidence in the second half of the year, although its bowling centres have continued to trade well following a strong Christmas.

The star of the show was health and fitness, where operating profits jumped from £2.5 million to £9.2 million as the five new venues that came on stream recorded "exceptionally high" membership sales.

Current trading here is also strong, with comparable sales 21 per cent up on a year ago, and Mr Grade said: "There is no evidence of membership retention" or recruitment being impacted at all by the economic downturn."

Tempus, page 30

US group buys Field for £194m

FIELD GROUP, the specialist packaging group, has agreed to a £194 million takeover bid from Chesapeake Corporation of America (Matthew Barbour writes).

The offer, at 320p per share, represents a premium of 41 per cent over the closing price of Field's shares on January 8, the day before it entered into discussions with the US packager. Field shares rose 23p to 316p.

Field's main market is producing packaging for drugs, products, cigarettes, food and drink. Its shares have fallen over the past 12 months in reaction to a decline in first-half profits and a warning on trading. Sales have been hit by the downturn in the retail sector.

Frank Knight, the chairman, said that he did not expect any job losses.

Tempus, page 30

Shares slump as Alldays profits halve to £10m

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Alldays, the convenience store group, nearly halved in value yesterday after it delivered much poorer than expected annual profits and gave warning that the current year will also disappoint.

The Scottish company, which operates nearly 1,000 stores either itself or through franchisees, announced that pre-tax profits for the year to November 1 had halved to £10.3 million from £21.5 million. Excluding exceptional items, pre-tax profit was £13.6 million. City expectations were for about £21 million.

Alldays shares fell 75p to 92p yesterday. They peaked at 62p in June 1998.

Although like-for-like sales rose 6 per cent in company-owned stores in the first eight weeks of this year, this is offset

by a reduction in gross margin and continuing problems with head office and supply chain costs.

The company said it is tackling the cost problem through a restructuring. Profits are also being hit by write-offs resulting from a decision to pull out of some unprofitable fast-food areas, such as pizza.

As part of the restructuring, Colin Glass, chief executive, is to take day-to-day control of the retail business. Layers of management are to be reduced.

The company, formerly known as Watson & Philip, is aiming the total dividend to 12p a share from 18.5p, with a final of 6p. Headline earnings fell to 23.2p a share from 35.8p. Despite the dividend cut, the cover based on headline profit after tax, is maintained at 1.9 times.

Life goes slow at Norwich

NORWICH Union's life business grew by just 4 per cent last year as the insurer struggled against volatile stock markets, slower economic growth and the strong pound (Gavin Lumsden writes).

In sterling terms, worldwide new life business rose by £18 million to £421 million. Norwich Union shares rose 19p to 487p.

UK sales rose by 8 per cent to £283 million. A surge in demand for group personal pensions and loan protection insurance boosted premium sales by 18 per cent to £126 million.

One-off single premium sales rose 2 per cent, although the latest issue of Flexi Bond, a with-profits investment, attracted £392 million, a rise of 6 per cent on 1997.

Tempus, page 30



Rowland Gee, managing director of Moss Bros, which recorded sales growth of 6.3 per cent

Increase in sales at Moss Bros

By FRASER NELSON

MOSS BROS has emerged as one of the main beneficiaries of the turmoil at Marks & Spencer — increasing its share of the men's suits market from 11.8 per cent to 13 per cent over the past year.

The company, which sells Hugo Boss, YSL and Armani suits from 185 stores, said its overall sales were up by 6.3 per cent against market growth of 2 per cent.

Terry Donovan, finance director, said: "Wherever we open a store, we win market share. Like-for-like sales fell by 1.3 per cent during the six months to January 16, but the company held its gross margins stable at about 50 per cent."

JD Sports surprised the City with a 6.5 per cent rise in underlying sales for the five weeks to January 2 — against the 16 per cent decline turned in by rival JJB Sports.

Peter Cowell, finance director, attributed this to its "being in tune with the customers", although analysts said it had a rough Christmas over 1997/8 and had an easier comparison.

A last-minute rush for chocolates failed to save the profits from a dismal half-year with underlying sales down by 3.8 per cent in the seven weeks to Boxing Day. An increase in its store portfolio helped overall sales to £87.8 million (£80.3 million) for six months to January 9.

Lonrho Africa into the red

By JASON NISSE

LONRHO AFRICA, which narrowly survived an attempt to oust half of its board last year, yesterday reported disastrous results for the year to September 30 (see Commentary, this page).

Blaming devaluations in three African nations, falling commodity prices and the Nairobi bombing, the group reported a pre-tax loss of £57.7 million, compared with a profit of £22.6 million in 1996/97.

This figure comes after £7 million of exceptional items that relate to provisions for restructuring taken after the company

was demerged from Lonrho last May. The company has streamlined its structure so that it has 28 business units in four sectors compared with the 90 that existed before the demerger. About 4,000 jobs have been lost, mostly in Africa.

Loss per share was 7.2p compared with earnings of 6.6p, though the company will still pay a maiden dividend of 2.9p to its shareholders.

These figures do not include any costs associated with the failed attempt by Blakeney Management to oust Bernard Asher, the chairman, and two non-executives. An extraordinary meeting was called but the

motion was narrowly defeated. Blakeney retains a 10 per cent stake in the group.

Mr Asher said that Lonrho Africa had to deal with a host of problems during the year. The most serious were currency devaluations, which saw the Zimbabwean dollar fall 63 per cent among other steep declines. Other problems included falling cotton prices and the decline in tourism that followed the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi.

Mr Asher said the group would now be taking a long, hard look at the businesses it inherited when it was demerged from Lonrho.

VIRGIN BUSINESS

RA S

A GLASS

DON'T LIFT A FINGER.

With a Virgin Business ticket, hot, cold and alcoholic drinks are brought to your seat. You don't have to move a muscle, not even to pay. And come a waiter-free area that also includes a complimentary breakfast, gourmet snacks and a Zone 1 tube pass if you're travelling to London.

Sit back and relax. The expenses are taken care of.

Trains

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Link to Internet proves key as FTSE advances

THE easiest way to sell stock in the market these days is to tag it with the Internet label. It is a sales strategy that appears to be working wonders for a lot of companies as they gaze across the Atlantic at some of the ratings being afforded many of Wall Street's high-tech issues. But investors can be forgiven for being somewhat confused by the identity of some of the shares now caught up in the Internet mania.

Take Great Universal Stores, up 49p at 728p. It enjoyed one of the best gains in the retail sector, driven by the growth prospects for the company once it utilises its talents on the Web to sell its products both here and in the US.

Internet prospects and an old-fashioned stock shortage also drove Reuters 88p higher to 868p.

Other companies have been getting in on the Internet act. Dimsun, up 40p at 610.59p, surged by 200p last week as some brokers began to rate it as a technology stock rather than a retailer. NRC, up 8p at 119p, also sees the benefits of surfing the Net.

WH Smith, which sells books on the Web, saw its price rise about 30p last week, but finished 10p down at 614p yesterday.

Paisa was wanted, 118p dearer at 845p. Its Symbian joint venture to develop intelligent hand-held devices for use with mobile phones continues to go from strength to strength.

The bears in the market admit there will be some winners, but insist the Internet bubble will eventually burst.

Share prices generally recovered some of this week's losses with investors again pinning their hopes on a cut in interest rates next month. The FTSE 100 index closed just below its best of the day despite the benefit of an early mark-up on Wall Street. The index ended 78.0 up at 6,103.6 on turnover of 1.3 billion shares.

Some bearish comments from Merrill Lynch, the broker, left GEC nursing a fall of 23p at 452p. BAe rallied 24p to 450p.

News of the merger between Telia, the Swedish telecom group, and its Norwegian rival, Telenor, fuelled fresh support for domestic issues. COLT Telecom surged a further 77p to 613.25p, Vodafone 36p to 611.59p, and Cable & Wireless 48p to 994p. En-



Michael Grade saw First Leisure shares hit by news of a profit warning. He cited a fall in consumer spending

gis advanced another 80p to 617.35p after the decision of parent company National Grid, up 74p at 552p, to drop its holding below 50 per cent. The move will catapult Energis into the top 100 companies.

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the US securities house, has cut its recommendation in Orange, down 68p at 932p, from "outperform" to "neutral".

Marks & Spencer fell 94p to a five-year low of 337p in the wake of this month's profits warning. Brokers are worried that the new spring collection will be left on the shelves. Sharni Ahmed, the man behind Joe Bloggs jeans, has emerged as the buyer behind this week's dramatic rally in the House of Fraser price. The shares have come up from a low

of 51p this month. Yesterday it advanced a further 4p to 924p with Mr Ahmed trying to pick up more stock. Hopes are high he may make a full bid.

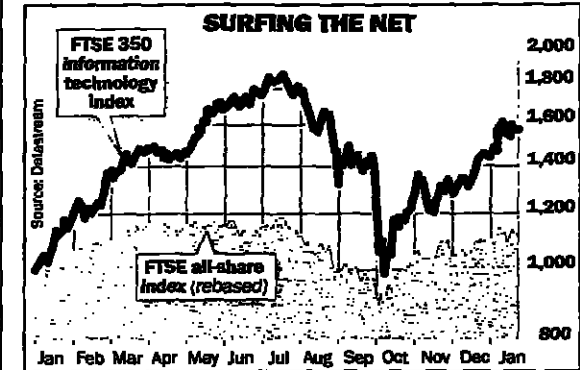
Meyer International came under selling pressure, dropping 27p to 301p. Stories in the Square Mile claim the group is about to hit the acquisition trail and has given SIG Group, 14p firmer at 140p, the once over. But brokers say Meyer may have to turn to shareholders to raise extra funds.

First Leisure, which announced earlier this month that it was in "strategic talks", was sent reeling by news of its profit warning, leaving the shares 22p lower at 192p. The nightclub, bars and health and fitness operator headed by Michael Grade blames a downturn in consumer spending for its woes. Last year pre-tax profits fell from £34.5 million to £33.3 million. Over in the beverage, Vaux shed 13p at 233p, despite strong indications that it is close to making an announcement about the future of the two breweries and 350 tenanted pubs it put up for sale in September.

Whispers in the industry suggest that a management buyout in pole position, although City sources are still sceptical over his ability to persuade his backers to stump up the £70 million or so required. If the MBO falls through, the likelihood is that Vaux will sell the brewery to Mansfield Brewery, 1p lighter 227p, retain the remaining 225 pubs in the North East and close the brewery in Sunderland.

CLILFEDGED: The bond market is again pinning its hopes on a cut in interest rates next month when the Monetary Policy Committee meets. Investors have shrugged off Monday's unexpected rise in the underlying inflation rate and, instead, concentrated on the weak retail sales and the minutes of the last MPC meeting, showing seven of the nine members voting for a cut in rates.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt rose 2p to 619.53 as a total of 33,000 contracts were completed. NEW YORK: Shares rallied on strong earnings reports and upbeat comments on the economy from Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 81.62 at 9,436.84.



IT is certain to end in tears and those small internet companies that have risen the fastest, are likely to be the hardest hit.

Take On-Line, the AIM-listed internet provider. It surged 10p to a new peak of 273p in a 1,000 share market. The price has come up from the 16p level in less than ten days.

This clamour for everything internet reflects the sort of ratings being paid in the US. Investors are prepared to discount a lot in this high-tech age. The situation

has only been exacerbated by the latest surge in profits at Microsoft. Other high tech stocks going better included, EasyNet Group, up 32p at 243p, Internet Technology, 42p higher at 141p and Intelligent Environment, 28p at 68p with Teather & Greenwood, the company's own broker, pushing the shares.

Companies such as Netcall, up 35p at 85p, are puzzled. It says it knows of no reason for the rise in its share price.

New York (midday):

Dow Jones: 9,436.84 (+81.62)

S&P Composite: 1,268.38 (+17.28)

Tokyo: 14,028.05 (+257.61)

Hong Kong: 10,814.91 (+24.80)

Amsterdam: 3,547.57 (+5.89)

Sydney: 3,372.7 (+18.10)

Frankfurt: 5,143.08 (+89.21)

Singapore: 1,548.27 (+1.17)

Brussels: 3,481.13 (+12.41)

Paris: 4,184.75 (+88.78)

Zurich: 1,492.30 (+10.10)

London: 6,103.6 (+78.0)

FTSE 100: 6,103.6 (+78.0)

FTSE 250: 3,884.2 (+32.1)

FTSE 350: 3,884.2 (+32.1)

FTSE 1000: 3,884.2 (+32.1)

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A volatile union

THE past 12 months have been rough for shareholders of Norwich Union. The price has oscillated between £4 and £5 enough times to make investors feel quite queasy. But while the shares have spent the past year energetically going precisely nowhere, shareholders, especially those who bought in or received shares in the demerger of 1997, can draw some satisfaction.

First, investors who were given shares or bought for 250p at demerger, are sitting on a good capital profit following the performance immediately after flotation. The dividends give an above average income yield, too. Looking forward, Norwich Union has defensive characteristics that will be appreciated by those who share Alan Greenspan's view that the stock market bubble is ready to burst again. Very short term, NU shares are alarm-

ingly volatile, but the stock did not slump with the majority last August.

NU's defensive qualities mean investors will probably have to forgo exciting share price performance, however. The demand for a broad spread of general insurance and investment products will support the company but growth does appear to be slowing, both at NU and across the industry. More pertinent, upstart new entrants are forcing profit margins down. NU looks an increasingly unlikely bid candidate, too.

The shares gained 4 per cent yesterday to close at 486p on publication of new business figures for past year. The numbers were not spectacular but were at least decent. Third quarter figures published last October were a good deal more depressing.

Continue holding.

Zergo Holdings

THE INTERNET gold rush continues, although, so far, few have caught sight of it.

Shares in Zergo Holdings, a seller of obscure Internet encryption software (which scrambles data sent over telephone lines) have rocketed from just 139p two weeks ago to 167p yesterday. Another star is On-Line, the computer games company, whose shares have soared, from 12p to 273p this year.

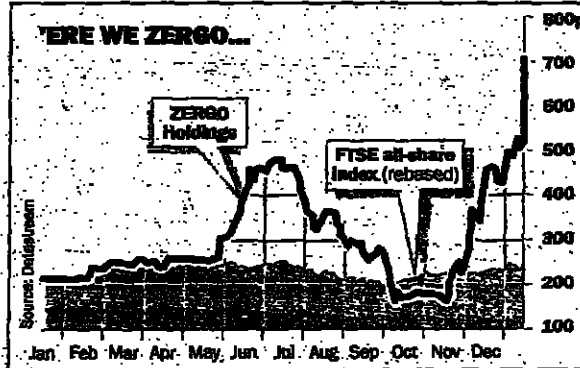
The fever is rampant. Although Zergo and On-Line are unrelated to their profit performance, they are very different. Zergo signed three impressive deals this week: with Intel, the microchip company, PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG. So with e-commerce now catching on, there is clearly a market for Zergo to exploit. Moreover the US govern-

ment does not allow its domestic companies to export encryption software because of fears over national security, leaving Europe wide open.

None of this justifies the company's ludicrous share price but it does give some sort of explanation. And at least Zergo has done something. The same cannot be said for the vast majority of

"Internet" companies that have seen their shares enter orbit for no better reason than they are able to demonstrate some connection, however spurious, with the net.

On-Line, according to one analyst "has done absolutely nothing this week. It simply has a fortuitous name and a lot of ignorant investors." Invest in wheat, not chaff.



First Leisure

MICHAEL GRADE has been tipped as a successor to Sir John Birt, and given his recent fortunes at First Leisure he might have pursued the opportunity with some vigour.

But yesterday, despite a sharp drop in the share price in response to poor current trading and lack of takeover news, Mr Grade made clear that he is "out of the media business" and "enjoying what I'm doing now".

He reckons he has achieved most of the strategic changes he set out to make when he took the helm at First Leisure 18 months ago. He has sold off mature businesses such as bingo while taking the group into the high-growth health and fitness club businesses. Many of the current woes — notably declining sales in its nightclub — are a symptom of the general slowdown in consumer spending, not because they

are the wrong kinds of business for First Leisure to be in.

But the company's lacklustre response to the challenges in contrast with more nimble-footed rivals like Lunnar — is worrying.

Another concern is that if Mr Grade believes he has set the group on the correct strategic path, why is he discussing "strategic initiatives" with third parties?

The shares traded at less than half the level of early last summer but meaningful recovery looks some way off. Bid speculation may buoy the shares, but do not count on a quick deal. At best, hold.

Field Group

IT LOOKS as if Chesapeake is the only game in town for Field shareholders. Two weeks after saying it had received an approach, and two months after it put out the profits warning that sent the shares crashing, Field management has succumbed to interest shown by Chesapeake.

We may hear more of Chesapeake, which is to use the Field acquisition as a launchpad for European expansion. Investors in other paper and packing outfits might welcome the approach, even if the price they get is a relatively measly 13p times expected current year earnings being offered to Field investors.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFTS			
COCOA			
Mar	207.00	Mar	1008.10
Jul	208.00	Jul	1014.00
Dec	207.00	Dec	1014.00
Mar	207.00	Mar	1014.00
Jul	207.00	Jul	1014.00
Dec	207.00	Dec	1014.00
Mar	207.00	Mar	1014.00
Jul	207.00	Jul	1014.00
Dec	207.00	Dec	1014.00
Mar	207.00	Mar	1014.00
Jul	207.00	Jul	1014.00
Dec	207.00	Dec	1014.00

ROBUSTA COFFEE			
Mar	164.10	Mar	158.50
Jul	164.10	Jul	158.50
Dec	164.10	Dec	158.50
Mar	164.10	Mar	158.50
Jul	164.10	Jul	158.50
Dec	164.10	Dec	158.50
Mar	164.10	Mar	158.50
Jul	164.10	Jul	158.50
Dec	164.10	Dec	158.50
Mar	164.10	Mar	158.50
Jul	164.10	Jul	158.50
Dec	164.10	Dec	158.50

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)			
Mar	231.25	Mar	231.25
Jul	231.25	Jul	231.25
Dec	231.25	Dec	231.25
Mar	231.25	Mar	231.25
Jul	231.25	Jul	231.25
Dec	231.25	Dec	231.25
Mar	231.25	Mar	231.25
Jul	231.25	Jul	231.25
Dec	231.25	Dec	231.25
Mar	231.25	Mar	231.25
Jul	231.25	Jul	231.25
Dec	231.25	Dec	231.25

MEAT & LIVESTOCK			
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00
Jul	118.00	Jul	118.00
Dec	118.00	Dec	118.00
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00
Jul	118.00	Jul	118.00
Dec	118.00	Dec	118.00
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00
Jul	118.00	Jul	118.00
Dec	118.00	Dec	118.00
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00
Jul	118.00	Jul	118.00
Dec	118.00	Dec	118.00

LIFE OPTIONS			
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00
Jul	118.00	Jul	118.00
Dec	118.00	Dec	118.00
Mar	118.00	Mar	118.00

The romance of industry returns

Something exciting is happening in British business. Instead of looking inwards and continually shooting ourselves in the foot, we are occasionally taking the initiative.

This week, given a favourable regulatory wind, a British company will have laid the foundation for a brand new, UK-based global telecoms corporation. Vodafone, the youngster that mushroomed in the shadow of British Telecom and Cable & Wireless, will have leaptfrogged them to become the UK's third most valuable company. Not for long, given the pace of change.

exciting is happening. It is vital for our future that they do.

Once upon a time, industry provided many of the most challenging and rewarding careers for graduates and clever school-leavers. Posh dunces, members of family firms and the bright but unqualified went into the City. That started changing in the early 1960s. The civil service shone. Increasingly, so did accountancy, law and merchant banks. That was where things were starting to happen and where money was to be made.

long downward spiral of textiles and heavy engineering, made industry seem more like the mud of Flanders than an attractive place to make a career. Engineers were despised; managing a factory earned a pittance far outweighed by the hassle. Social cachet? Forget it. To make things worse the 1980s and early 1990s saw middle managers rationalised to the dole queue in tumbrel-loads.

Market forces work. So industry became as cool as Hell. The top international accountancy firms vacuumed up a huge proportion of able level-headed graduates. The City in its various forms lured those who hankered for excitement and money. Merchant banks were *de rigueur* for aspiring Tory politicians. The broadcast media and PR became the magnet for those of more liberal bent or those who preferred fame to fortune. With luck



GRAHAM SEALJEANT

they could have both. Those unfashionable folk who still chose to work in industry could be patronised by such smart folk. The greatest irony of all, perhaps, was that people who were abysmally paid in comparison with media and City stars were additionally attacked for earning "fat-cat" pay. Aside from relative frugality, the

only thing remarkable about the average top manager's pay was that it was publicly revealed for all to see, by law. The far larger sums earned for cushier careers in the professions and the screen world remained secret. No wonder the country has so few top businessmen and women that the same unremarkable names crop up for all the available slots and often fail by stretching their talent too thinly.

Some of our ablest people still went into industry. Often they were scientists who had little other option outside academic life. No wonder groups such as Glaxo Wellcome have been shining stars in a dull sky and that so many of our entrepreneurial success stories are in electronics and bioscience. If more of our ambitious achievers went into industry, there would be many more success stories. Global restructuring should be

the catalyst to change our culture away from the cults of town fashion and ignorance. This is not a management consultant's concept. It is happening now, on a grand scale, creating large numbers of global companies in a host of industries and changing business for ever. Stuck outside euroland, Britain must try twice as hard to make the best of the process.

We should consciously aim, with the Government, to have a hundred British multinationals, including a couple in Wales and half a dozen in Scotland. That means companies that have either UK financial control or none; that have business as well as corporate headquarters here; and that use English as their working language.

In other respects, the new multinationals will mostly be different from the old, drawing their managers as well as their shareholders in-

discriminately from across Europe and further afield. They will be spearheads of a new multinationalism. The new defence grouping growing from British Aerospace and Marconi must be one of these.

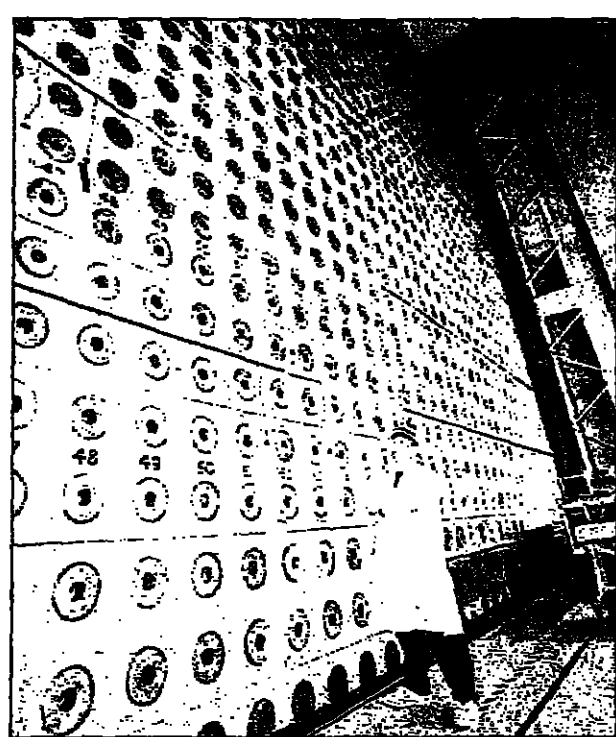
For those seeking adventure, many more exciting careers will open up, comparable to the exploration and conquest that inspired earlier generations and that fire oil executives today. The romance of industry is returning. But such lives are tough and globetrotting managers will burn out almost as fast as City traders. In the new global corporation, in the age of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, retirement at 50 will be the norm.

Sadly, our public life is still myopic and inward-looking. Without government benevolence, rather than the consumer bias promised by Mr Blair, and real industrial vision instead of penny ideas, Britain will lose out. Outside City finance, our business will become branch offices and our managers stagnate as provincials in a global era.

We cannot afford to let the opportunities of the next years slip.



Jürgen Trittin was in London trying to sort out the row with UK ministers. It was his second diplomatic mission in a week



Sellafield, which reprocesses fuel, could lose the contract

Nuclear energy is a pretty emotive topic. We all want cheap electricity but many of us are worried about how it is produced. We want to cut emissions from coal-burning power stations, but are we willing to see miners thrown out of work? We are worried about gas-burning stations but are we willing to turn to nuclear electricity?

And if we are willing to turn to nuclear electricity, are we willing to have the reprocessing of the used fuel on our doorstep? Germany's decision to go green and phase out nuclear energy — which produces a third of the country's electricity — is controversial even within Germany. But with the Green Party in Gerhard Schröder's Government, there is a mandate for it. However, the decision by Germany to stop sending its used nuclear fuel abroad for reprocessing has caused an international storm which was blowing through Whitehall yesterday.

At issue is a £1.2 billion contract that Germany has with BNFL for the state-run utility to reprocess the fuel at the controversial Thorpe plant at Sellafield in Cumbria. Germany says it is cancelling the contract, arguing that there is a *force majeure* because of the new Government elected last September. If the contract is lost, jobs are almost certain to follow, though BNFL denies this. Germany accounts for more than a tenth of Thorpe's turnover. It is also cancelling contracts in France where the state reprocessing company, Cogema, said the

Germans spark row over nuclear stance

loss of the work will cost it over £4.5 billion (£3.2 billion). Yesterday Jürgen Trittin, the Greens' German Environment Secretary, was in London to try to pour oil on the troubled waters, as it were. He met Stephen Byers, the new Trade and Industry Secretary, and Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister. It is the height of irony that Meacher, who is as green as they come within the pale pink of new Labour, was trying to persuade Germany to carry on sending dangerous nuclear waste to the UK.

It was Trittin's second diplomatic mission in a week, having gone cap in hand to Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister. That trip looks like yielding a deal, with Germany ready to pay compensation, though Trittin is anxious to sort out the BNFL issue before settling with France. Byers has been taking a hard line with Trittin, backing BNFL. "It is clear that there are binding contracts between UK and German companies and letters between UK and German governments containing commitments which we expect to be honoured," a spokesman at his office said. Last night

Schröder's decision to go green has serious repercussions for the UK, says Sigrid Auferbeck

it seemed that a similar compromise might be reached. The German Government, by deciding to ban reprocessing abroad, not only risks a rift with Britain and France, but also with an outraged domestic industry. Germany will have to take back contaminated fuel from abroad and store it in facilities it has yet to build. Two of

Schröder's allies, state premiers Wolfgang Clement and Gerhard Schröder, have attacked the move. The number of nuclear transports is likely to increase, which will inevitably evoke anti-nuclear protest. It was these protests that in the late 1980s made it impossible for the German Government to install its own reprocessing

plant in Germany and chose to have it recycled abroad.

The German nuclear industry is once more discredited by Schröder. The German energy giants — the likes of Veba, RWE and Vag — voiced their anger last week when hearing about Trittin's plans. Feelings of betrayal were even stronger since Schröder had promised to involve industry in the process of nuclear decommissioning. They demanded a new, long-term scenario for ending nuclear energy. Ulrich Hartmann, head of Veba, said that experience had shown that planning and building storages close to the plants, as the new Government demands, would take four or even six years.

The next round of "consensus talks" between industry and Government is scheduled for next Tuesday, but Schröder is due to meet the leaders of RWE, Veba, Vag and Energie Baden-Württemberg the day before. It looks like the solution could again be money driven, with Economics Minister Werner Müller handing out tax concessions. Britain and France, meanwhile, might as well make the most of it. Trittin and Schröder,



Meacher: involved in talks



Strauss-Kahn: deal likely

Cash back

OPPORTUNITY calls again for Paul Bradshaw, serial insurance entrepreneur, who is heading back to J. Rothschild Assurance, part of Sir Mark Weinberg's St James's Place Capital. Under a deal of mind-boggling complexity, he will be chief executive of J Rothschild International, which sells offshore and European policies.

Bradshaw, who earlier set up Skandia's UK operation, helped to found JRI in 1992 but ended up at Scottish Amicable when the latter took over the running of the business. He was to be chief executive of ScotAm, and share in the heavy-

ly criticised incentive plan directors would have enjoyed, but this was stopped when Prudential stepped in to buy the insurer in 1997.

Trust me, this is the simplified version. An equally complex arrangement allows him to buy 5 per cent of the overseas operations and sell this back to St James's in five to seven years' time, keeping any increase in value.

How might this compare with the ScotAm windfall, then? "I really haven't done that comparison and I really don't want to get into a discussion on the past," he says, a touch frostily.

Of course. This is the man who told a colleague, as that incentive scheme went overboard: "I'm from an entrepreneurial background — an extra million or two isn't that important to me."

A READER wonders whether the Inland Revenue, which has admitted sending out 800,000 inaccurate statements of account, can be trusted to calculate anyone's tax affairs.

On page seven of this year's publication, Understanding Your Tax Code, the sum of £15,820 is divided by 12 to equal £1,318. (Wrong). The



Revenue admits its mistake. A message has gone to all tax offices, and meanwhile, another edition is being printed. I get the impression they were hoping no one would notice.

Brown nose

I HEAR an intriguing suggestion about the source of all those stories concerning Jack Cunningham, the Cabinet enforcer, and his love of expensive Brussels hotels. I wrote the other day that his job was always going to make him enemies. In response I am pointed towards one in particular — Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and his office.

Cunningham is a Blair man, of course. And you are either for Blair or for Brown in this administration. Thus do our

leaders, deprived of a proper Opposition, fight among themselves like weasels in a sack. But hang on, say I. Charlie Whelan had just about cleared his desk when the Cunningham stories started? My informant winks. "Maybe he's moonlighting."

AS MILLENNIUM bug fears grow, I hear of one City blade who was worried about his top-of-the-range BMW. (As you know, the average family saloon has more computing power in it than the first successful Moon flight.)

He approached the dealer for advice. Switch on the motor a couple of minutes before midnight, New Year's Eve, he was told, and keep it running until the new century is born. No, I have no idea if it will work.

On a wing

SOMEONE clearly has it in for Robert Ayling, BA's chief executive. Even *The Economist* has rubbished his "belligerent management style", saying BA now offers "service with a sneer".

It is just like a similar campaign against Richard Branson a while back with seemingly co-ordinated attacks in *The Spectator* and, yes, *The Economist*. You don't think... Anyway, Ayling has taken measures to prevent any further disasters such as the infamous

ethnic tailfins. BA has quietly created a campaigns team to deal with long-term issues such as the millennium bug and Terminal 5.

The job of running the four-strong team is advertised in BA News but may have to be an external appointment. The ad talks about "achieving maximum, non-paid-for, good publicity", which all sounds rather sinister. And my insider at BA calls them "Bob's KGB".

"I haven't heard of them referred to in that light before — that isn't the role," says a shocked BA spokesman. I suggest Charlie Whelan for the post but I fear BA no longer takes me seriously.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk



Ayling: found his style of management rubbished

Information barriers set to collapse

The £67 billion merger of Vodafone and AirTouch this week was a reminder of just how successful mobile phone companies have been over the past five years in changing our lives. Yet the mobile phone revolution is far from over, and businesses face yet another technological upheaval as new services are introduced.

By late spring, Vodafone AirTouch — alongside several other telecoms and media companies — will begin bidding for the next set of mobile phone licences in an auction that, it is estimated, will raise more than £1 billion for the Government. With the licences will come UMTS (universal mobile telecommunications system), a technology standard that will allow mobile phones to send and receive data at many times the speed of Internet connections today.

Business people will be able to conduct video conferences using mobile phone handsets, and access the Internet, or their corporate intranet, on the move. The quality of calls made on mobile networks will also improve dramatically. Experts predict that when this happens the difference between fixed-line and mobile telephones will all but disappear. Handsets will probably be able to switch easily to a land line when they are within an office, and a mobile line when they are out in the open air.

Executives at companies such as Cisco Systems, the US Internet company, also suggest that in five years, the enormous demand for data services will mean that all voice calls are free. Even BT is looking at ways of charging for telephone



calls according to how much information is downloaded instead of according to how much time is spent online. This would, in effect, make all voice calls free given how little bandwidth they require.

It is also hoped that UMTS licences will end the incompatibility between US and European mobile phone networks.

For businesses outside the telecoms industry, the implications of UMTS are still some way off, and many analysts believe such services will not be introduced until 2002. But when they are, nearly all barriers to the immediate distribution of information will be pulled down.

AN ONLINE system for distributing library music to broadcasters, producers and advertisers was launched this week by Multimedia Archive & Retrieval Systems (Mars), a UK company backed by 3i, the venture capitalist group.

INTERNET retailers may have enjoyed a bumper Christmas, but a survey by Jupiter Communications and NFO Interactive, out this week, shows that one in four people who bought goods online was dissatisfied with the experience.

CHRIS AYRES

THE SUNDAY TIMES PRESENTS

Valentine's Day

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

tommy AND tommy girl

The Sunday Times offers you the opportunity to place a Valentine's message in the paper on Sunday February 14th 1999. In addition we will send a 50ml bottle of tommygirl (RRP £25) or tommy (RRP £22) together with a note which reads "Look for your message in the Sunday Times on Valentine's Day". The cost is from £35 for a minimum 3 line message and a 50ml fragrance. Please indicate whether the male or female fragrance is required by ticking the relevant box below.

"The most romantic message published will win a romantic holiday for two!"

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		2	£35
		3	£35
		4	£42
		5	£48
		6	£54

EACH SUBSEQUENT LINE WILL BE CHARGED AT £6.00 *INCLUDES VAT

YOUR DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

YOUR VALENTINE'S DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

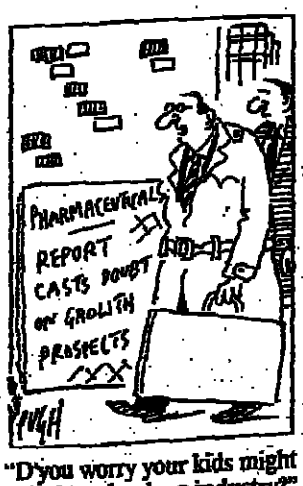
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"Do you worry your kids might drift into the drug industry?"

Growth in drugs firms to fall short of forecasts

By PAUL DURMAN

THE growth of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, highly prized by institutional investors, will fall far short of market expectations, according to new analysis by the Boston Consulting Group.

An inability to raise prices and patent expiries on an "unprecedented" number of big-selling drugs will reduce the annual earnings growth of the top 20 companies to a maximum of 7.7 per cent, BCG believes. Investment analysts are forecasting that earnings will grow at 13 per cent, even faster than the 11 per cent achieved in the more favourable conditions of the past five years.

The BCG report says that patent expiries mean that "the

average top company should expect to lose roughly 30 per cent of 1997 sales to generics over the next five years".

The consultants argue that scientific advances will reduce the number of "blockbuster" drugs — the \$1 billion a year medicines that are the industry's Holy Grail. Increased understanding of genomics will allow drugs to be targeted at particular genetic groups.

Peter Goldsborough, a senior vice-president in BCG's healthcare practice, said: "Drugs will be developed for genetically distinct sub-populations rather than for entire populations. Blockbuster drugs will become less likely, less frequent than they have been in the past. Pharma companies will redouble their efforts to really find those drugs that have the potential to become blockbusters."

The report says the looming earnings gap will encourage more companies to merge to strengthen their product pipeline and their research operations. BCG expects the leading companies to turn increasingly to the biotechnology industry as a source of new products.

"Already, drugs licensed from biotech and other external sources represent roughly 35 per cent of the existing pipeline in the average top pharmaceutical company. There is potential, however, for even more in-licensing."

BCG also urges simultaneous global launches and improved life-cycle management to bring the full benefit from promising medicines.

The firm believes the industry will have to become much more responsive to consumer demands as the Internet enables patients to become better informed about available treatments.

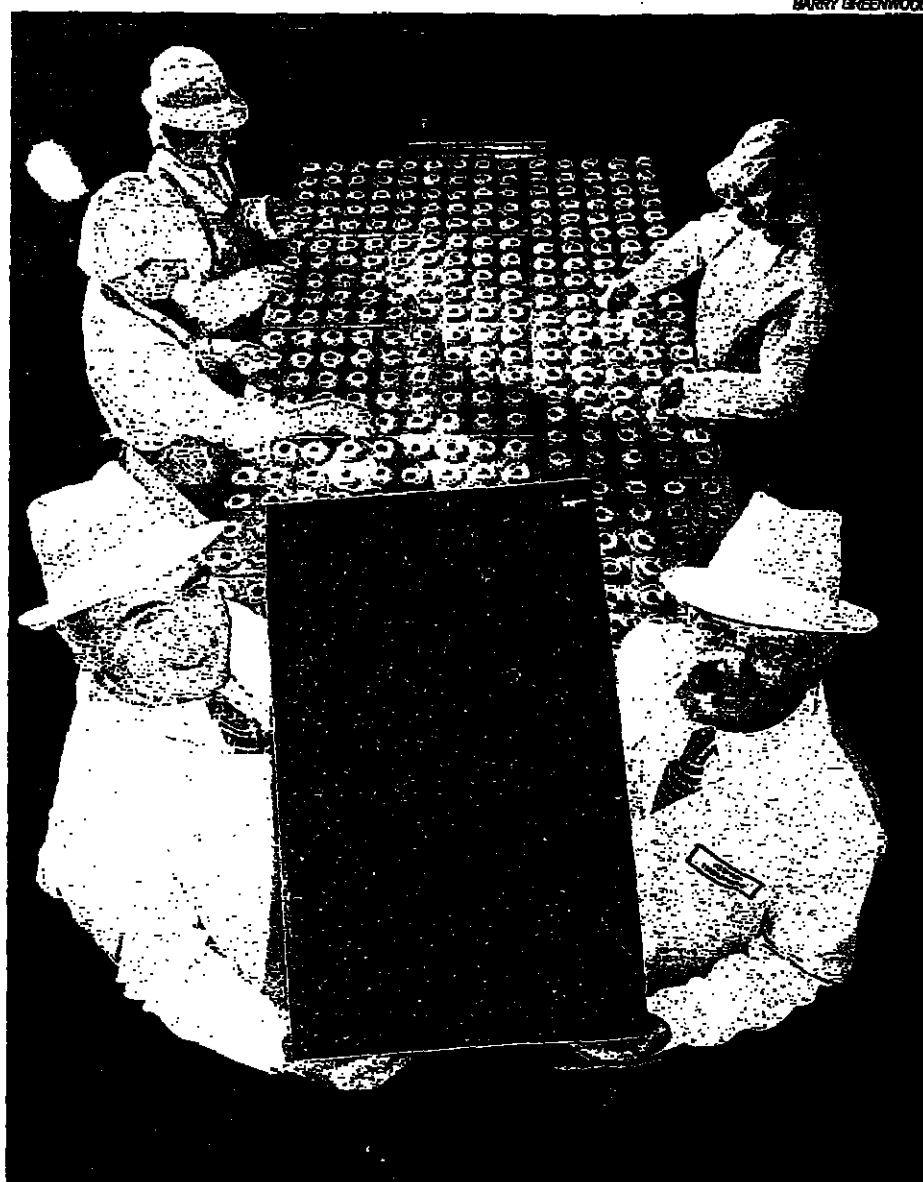
□ *The Pharmaceutical Industry in its Second Century: From Serendipity to Strategy*, The Boston Consulting Group.

Portman rejects Hardern

PORTMAN Building Society has become the latest mutual to fend off the advances of Michael Hardern, the freelance butler who is campaigning to force societies to convert to banks and distribute free shares to members (Gavin Lumsden writes).

Portman said Mr Hardern's nomination to the board and his proposed conversion resolution had been ruled invalid under the so-called "Hickmott" ruling, which bans attempts to interfere in the directors' right to manage the affairs of a building society.

Mr Hardern suffered a similar rejection from Yorkshire Building Society on Tuesday, while on Monday, Britannia quashed his resolution but allowed him to stand for the board.



Cherry picking: John Cummings, left, and Alwin Thompson, joint managing directors of Inter Link Foods, the cake and pastry company, yesterday announced the first results since flotation on AIM in August. The group showed a pre-tax profit of £270,000 for the six months to October 31, up from £202,000 last time, and earnings were 5.6p a share (5p). No dividend was offered.

DaimlerChrysler on the road with £49bn giant

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

DAIMLERCHRYSLER, the US/German motor group, has launched a global financial services business with a portfolio of \$81 billion (£49 billion). It will rank fourth among non-bank financial services groups, including giants such as GE Capital.

The new business will be formed from merging the leasing and financing arms of Chrysler Financial Company and Mercedes-Benz Credit Corporation into a single operation within DaimlerChrysler Services, known as debis, and with its headquarters in Berlin.

DaimlerChrysler said yesterday that debis would have annual revenues of \$10 billion.

The core of the business will be automotive financing and leasing. Chrysler's financial services business grew out of Chrysler Credit Corporation, which was created in 1964 to provide loans to Chrysler's customers and dealer network, later expanding into tax-leveraged leasing and real estate finance.

However, debis is also establishing a Capital Services unit, based in Norwalk, Connecticut, which will expand the

non-automotive leasing business.

This will include activities such as ship financing, aircraft leasing as well as structuring complex financings and fund packages.

DaimlerChrysler also revealed plans yesterday to buy out the half share in Adranz, owned by ABB, for \$472 million.

Adranz is a rolling stock manufacturer, making locomotives, high-speed trains and underground trains as well as signal and traffic control systems. Adranz had revenues in 1997 of \$3.7 billion.

Nordic telecom duo plan merger

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

SWEDEN and Norway have agreed to merge their telephone companies, Telia and Telenor, in a pact aimed at creating a Nordic telecoms champion capable of defending its position against the threat from telecoms industry giants.

The two governments have agreed that a merged Nordic phone company would be floated on the stock market as soon as possible. Sweden's Telia would account for 60 per cent with Norway's Telenor taking 40 per cent.

However, both governments have agreed to reduce their respective stakes to 33.4 per cent in the flotation, leaving the public with 33.2 per cent.

Tormod Hermansen, chief executive of Telenor, who will be chief executive of the merged group, said: "We will create a Nordic flagship in the telecommunications and IT industry. We are world-class contenders in important areas such as mobile, Internet and satellite services."

The move is also being seen as an opportunity to cut costs by removing the frontier between their operations and eliminating duplication. The combined workforce totals 51,000 and conservative estimates suggest a reduction of 5 per cent is on the cards.

Sweden and Norway have achieved a market penetration in mobile phones of 44 and 46 per cent respectively. That compares with about 20 per cent in the UK.

According to HSBC, which is advising Telenor, the move is also a response to the pace of change in the Telecoms sector. Its close neighbour, TeleDanmark, has recently agreed a partnership deal with Ameritech, the US company.

The two companies have combined revenues of \$kr 80 billion (£6.2 billion) and operating profit of SEK 13 billion.

The merged group, which has yet to choose a name will be led by Jan Stenberg as chairman who is managing director of SAS, the airline group, another cross-border Nordic business.

Nomura fined for racketeer payoffs

A JAPANESE court yesterday fined Nomura Securities ¥100 million (£536,000) and sentenced former top company officials to suspended prison terms for making illegal payoffs to a racketeer. The Tokyo District Court sentenced former Nomura president Hideo Sakamaki, 63, and former managing director Nobutaka Fujikura, 56, to one-year prison terms, suspended for three years. The court also sentenced Shiroki Matsuki, 54, Nomura's former managing director, to an eight-month prison term, suspended for three years.

In yesterday's ruling, Judge Yuichi Okada said that the three former Nomura officials authorised payments totalling ¥49.73 million between January and June 1995 to Ryutoku Koike, the racketeer, in exchange for his promise not to disrupt the company's shareholders' meeting. The ruling said that Sakamaki and Fujikura also paid an additional ¥50 million in cash to Koike at the company's head office in Tokyo in March 1995.

AlliedSignal advances

ALLIEDSIGNAL, the US industrial components manufacturer, yesterday reported that fourth-quarter earnings per share jumped 15 per cent, meeting Wall Street expectations, and predicted earnings per share will rise at least 13 per cent in 1999, after 28 straight quarters of at least 14 per cent growth. The company, which last year mounted an unsuccessful \$10 billion (£6 billion) bid for AMP, the electrical connector maker, posted fourth-quarter net income of \$352 million, or 62 cents per share, a record. The previous year it earned \$310 million, or 54 cents per share.

ICS back in profit

INDUSTRIAL CONTROL SERVICES, the control and safety systems group, has returned to profitability. Exceptional charges related to the sale of Bristol, its loss-making subsidiary, caused ICS to post a pre-tax loss of £3.9 million for the six months to November 30, an improvement on the £27.4 million loss for the same period last year, on sales up to £41.2 million (£37 million). Loss per share was 2.3p (49.7p). No interim dividend was declared. Trevor Wheatley, chairman, said: "The group is well placed to make satisfactory progress in the full year, which would enable a return to the dividend list."

Flair sale hits Adscene

ADSCENE, the local newspaper and publishing group, saw first-half results hit by a £5.4 million charge from the disposal of Flair, its commercial printing business. Pre-tax loss for the six months to November 28 was £3 million, against a £2.9 million profit last time, on a turnover of £26.2 million (£26.9 million). The exceptionals led to a loss per share of 19.47p (earnings of 6.45p), but the interim dividend of 3.5p was maintained. David Fordham, chief executive, said: "The prospects for the group have been significantly improved following the disposal of Flair." Shares were down 3p to 162½p.

French boost at C&F

COLEFAX & FOWLER, the household goods group, lifted pre-tax profits 20 per cent to £1.7 million for the six months to October 31, up from £1.4 million last time. Sales were boosted by the acquisition of Manuel Carovias, a French fabric company, to £31.2 million (£24.1 million). Earnings per share were 4.23p (3.91p) and an interim dividend of 1.17p was offered (1.1p). David Green, chairman, said that market conditions in the US and Europe were "positive", but that the UK "is weak at present".

Spare us rule by quango

The DTI must not hand regulation of accountants to unaccountable outsiders, says Stella Fearnley

THE DTI issued its Green Paper, *A Framework for Independent Regulation of the Accountancy Profession*, with a statement by Ian McCartney, the minister, that if the proposed new system did not deliver independence, transparency and effectiveness, statutory regulation would follow.

Proposals for changes to the existing regulatory framework had been put to the DTI by the accountancy bodies, under the chairmanship of Chris Swinson. He recommends establishment of an independent foundation, funded by the professional bodies. It would own and make appointments to the Auditing Practices Board (APB), the Investigation and Discipline Board (IDB), a successor to the Joint Disciplinary Scheme, and a new review board responsible for independent oversight of the APB and the IDB. It would also oversee regulatory and disciplinary processes managed by the professional bodies themselves, including an Ethics Standards Board (ESB).

Swinson proposes that the foundation should have no accountant members and let it know that you are pondering the idea of changing auditors or looking around for tax advice, or even maybe wondering about a flotation shortly... oh, and you also like art.

Ernst & Young is sponsoring the great blockbuster Monet exhibition at the Royal Academy, which opens this Saturday and for which squillions of tickets have already been sold. Once you

proposals. The Green Paper puts the ESB in foundation ownership. It demands that 60 per cent of IDB and ESB members be non-accountants, that 60 per cent of APB members be non-auditors and that the accountant on the review board be a non-practitioner. The effect of the Minister's changes is that accountancy bodies will have limited input into, and no control over, activities of the key subsidiary boards. Anyone knowing the dynamics of regulation will see that the changes make the system hard to operate.

Professional bodies like to regulate themselves because of the power and status derived. They argue that practitioner-led regulation is most effective because practitioners have full understanding of the areas regulated. But self-regulatory bodies are always accused of acting in the interests of members rather than the public.

The State wields power over self-regulatory bodies with threats to end self-regulation. The alternative of State regulation, much favoured by the Left, is not necessarily better for consumers. State regulation can be costly, bureaucratic, lacking in practical expertise and inflexible. Another danger is political interference. Taking direct responsibility for regulation is a high-risk



Stella Fearnley sees dangers in Green Paper proposals

strategy for a government department because there is no one else to blame if things go wrong, and a vital attribute of any regulatory system is that it must be respected by the regulatory constituency, because mass non-compliance undermines a regulator's authority.

What the Green Paper proposes is neither fish nor fowl. It is a quango with no legal authority, owned neither by the

State nor the professional bodies, with subsidiary boards expected to pronounce on complex, technical issues, but controlled by people who, by definition, have insufficient understanding of them. The Accounting Standards Board and the Financial Reporting Review Panel (bodies with some statutory support) have won respect for their technical output. This could not have been done if

they were overloaded with lay members. Lay members are essential to ensure fair play, but my experience on the ICAEW Investigation Committee is that their contribution can be dangerously limited by lack of technical understanding.

Swinson's proposals are wiser than the DTI may think. By keeping substantial involvement from the profession, with independent oversight, the profession could be blamed if the new system fails. By altering the balance, the minister cannot hold the profession responsible for failure, and puts himself in the line of fire. The professional bodies may even wash their hands of it, leaving the DTI with a complex regulatory role that it may not want, particularly as the Financial Services Authority has yet to prove itself.

Swinson had a chance of balancing independence, transparency and effectiveness, and the professional bodies backed the proposals. The changes have prejudiced the system's chances of effectiveness and its support from its constituency. With such problems at the outset, who will want to serve on these bodies, let alone chair them? Perhaps the minister should think again and leave the profession responsible for making this system work in the first instance. He can change it if they fail, and retain his big stick to beat them.

The author, a principal lecturer in accounting at Portsmouth Business School, is on the Council of the ICAEW

Why accountants are changing their style

Nobody can ever accuse academics of not changing their minds. Back in 1994, Mike Power, who is Professor of Accounting at the London School of Economics, wrote a pamphlet for Demos, the think-tank, entitled *The Audit Implosion*. Now he has come up with another one, given as the inaugural Chartered Accountants' Trustees annual lecture. This one is called *The Audit Implosion*. The ordinary laws of physics, obviously do not apply to accountants.

What has happened is simple. In the last few years, auditors have decided that the old financial audit is on its way out. So, instead, they have been piling into all sorts of other services, from risk management to outsourcing, and making sure that they don't call them anything like "audit". In fact, in accounting firms these days, audit has become almost a taboo word. People pull themselves up to their full height, flex their muscles and tell you rather smugly that what they are providing these days is business assurance services.

As Power will point out to you, the accountants are doing what any adept business organisation does when it sees its markets changing.

"They are reinventing new markets for existing forms of expertise," is how he puts it. "This also means a decline in accountants' fees. Inevitably the proportion of purely trained accountants in the large firms goes down and, at the same time, the number of people with a background in what you could loosely call human resources goes up. This is not necessarily a good thing."

And there are inevitable effects on the way companies organise themselves as a result. The effect of corporate governance codes has probably done as much as anything to bring about this change.

On the surface, such emphasis on corporate governance should have strengthened the position of financial audit. "However," suggests Power, "on closer examination it is operating more as a Trojan horse to challenge the external financial audit practice. On the back of its recommendations, new potential markets for advice have been created, supported by an endless stream of professional conferences."

What has happened, he suggests, is that the regulation has switched its focus. What used to be external is now internal. "The development of voluntary codes of practice marks out the inside of organisations as a regulatory space," he says. So, a huge battle

develops as internal auditors expand their role, and other disciplines within a company, such as human resources, for example, try to muscle in on the work.

Part of this has also come about as a result of the fear of litigation that hangs over audit firms. Power looks at the document on how auditors should go about providing assurance on internal control that the Auditing Practices Board published last year. "Two things are striking," he points out. "Firstly, the level of caution and caveats about determining the scope of an assignment and giving an opinion make one wonder whether accountants can ever give a professional opinion on anything and whether the fear of litigation is stultifying expertise." The second feature he points to is "a further, though by no means unique, characterisation of the audit implosion: the flight from public professional opinion."

He suggests that a combination of fear of litigation, the switch into new services, and the emphasis on corporate governance has brought about an important transition "from the financial audit process to the reform of the internal structure and process of organisations; from external auditing to installing a self-auditing capacity."

The result of this is that what used to be simply a part of the planning of an audit, assessing where the risk lay within the client's systems, becomes a product in itself. And that has profound implications for the whole idea of auditor independence.

If risk can be assessed and much of the regulation of the risks is either carried on in-house or is outsourced, then independence becomes less important. This again aids the auditors. It is much easier to sell a service to a friendly client than to someone you, theoretically, have to stand toe-to-toe with. What will remain as the crucial selling point will be objectivity.

As Power says, "the most descriptively contentious tendency of the audit implosion" will be "the marginalisation of the problem of auditor independence."

If Power is right, what we are seeing is the disassembly and reassembly of the elements that traditionally go to make up financial auditing.

The same elements all remain. They are simply bolted together in a very different way and one that takes the firms far from their old audit function. The real question is, having effectively given up their monopoly in the process, whether they will be able to reap the benefits from their new creation.



ROBERT BRUCE

Insider's view on art show

NOW is the time to phone up Ernst & Young and let it know that you are pondering the idea of changing auditors or looking around for tax advice, or even maybe wondering about a flotation shortly... oh, and you also like art.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Contenders ready

THE final nominations are in for the race to shun up the greasy pole at Moorgate Place. Or, to be more dignified, to become next in line in the three-year run-up to becoming president of the English ICA. As expected, the suave Michael Groom is front-runner as council's favourite, but he is forecast to be given a tough time in the final furlong by David Hunt, the ever-cheerful Pat-

nell Kerr Forster partner from Nottingham. On the outside, and widely seen as putting down a marker for the future, are the youthful Nick Parker, a tax partner from Southampton, and Anne Jenkins, the training and communications expert from Putney. Results of the voting should be with us soon.

Deloitte recruit

THERE seems to be no end to the looting being thrown into the

corporate finance pond by Deloitte & Touche. The lucky winner this week is Gordon McKechnie, one-time vice-president of JP Morgan and latterly managing director, structured finance, at NatWest Markets. He has joined the firm as a partner in the corporate finance department to head the project finance business. "Our aim here is to provide advice of the highest quality to clients," said a spokesman. The money is believed to be of the highest quality, too.

ROBERT BRUCE

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Bargains of the week: from a Valentine's break in the lakelands of Fermanagh to a break with the children on Miami's South Beach



PACK YOUR BAGS
A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices

FREE tickets to the Monet in the 20th century exhibition, which opens at the Royal Academy in London on Saturday, are included in special weekend packages from Le Meridien hotel group. Prices start from £69.50 a night for a minimum two-night stay at the Waldorf. Details: 0800 317006.

THE WYE Valley and Hereford's cathedral and museums will be visited on a five-day tour starting from the Peterborough area on February 8 with Shaw's Coaches. The holiday costs from £195 and includes four nights half-board at a leading country house hotel with many leisure facilities and entertainment each night. Details: 01778 342224.

THE GLENS of Antrim and the Fermanagh lakelands in Northern Ireland offer a romantic setting for Valentine's weekend, and Rural Cottage Holidays has properties available there from £90 for two nights. Longer stays are possible; return flights can be arranged from Gatwick to Belfast from £66. Details: 01232 241100.

A FOUR-POSTER bed and wood-burner are among the furniture in an 18th-century cottage near Totnes, Devon, available for a three-night Valentine's break from Hoseasons. It sleeps six, costs £297 and is near Kingston House, which has a brasserie and restaurant. Details: 01502 501515.

THE award-winning Angel Hotel, Bury St Edmunds, dates from the 15th century and is now included in Sunvil UK's programme. A Valentine's package there costs £287 for two nights half-board, including a special dinner. Details: 0181-232 9788.

HOLIDAY Inn Express has recently opened its newest hotel at Salford Quays, Manchester, where a room for two adults and two children is available from £49.50 a night. Details: 0800 897212.

AMSTERDAM by ferry might seem an old-fashioned idea, but Stena Line claims its service from London via the Harwich to Hook of Holland high-speed ferry, relaunched this week, undercuts Eurostar by £30 and takes only 90 minutes longer. Prices for a three-day Apex return start at £49. Details: 0990 455455.

A SKIING weekend for £114 with coach travel is available for students and under-26s from Campus. Leave from London next Thursday, take Le Shuttle to France and enjoy three full days in the French Alps with two nights B&B. Ski hire and pass are extra. Details: 0171-730 3402.

HEAD for the slopes and enjoy free car hire is the ambivalent message from Ski Spirit, which has bargain deals to Chamonix for a week from this Sunday and next Sunday. Fly from Gatwick to Geneva, pick up the car and stay in chalet accommodation with half board for £358. Children pay £150. Details: 01252 616789.

ICELAND for a weekend is a novel, if chilly, idea and is currently available from Time

Off at a £100 discount, including Valentine's weekend. Fly from Heathrow or Glasgow and spend two nights with breakfast in a three-star Reykjavik hotel from £262. Sightseeing trips can be arranged. Details: 0990 846363.

FUERTEVENTURA, one of the least crowded Canary Islands, is available for £179 for a week from Co-op with a flight from Gatwick next Wednesday. The deal is for a First Choice self-catering package. Details: 0541 500388.

THE WINTER sales have branched out to include city breaks on the Continent, with Thomas Cook Holidays offering discounts to several popular destinations, provided bookings are made by Wednesday. Paris for three nights from £119, Bruges from £149 and Prague for two from £199, all with return flights from Heathrow, are among the best deals. Details: 01733 418200.

MADEIRA is seldom available at bargain prices, but Lunn Poly is offering a week's B&B there with Thomson at a three-star hotel for £279, for those who can make the flight from Glasgow on February 1. Details from Lunn Poly Holiday Shops.



Hot spot: visit the temple at Luxor on a Nile cruise

LONG HAUL

BALI, Penang and combined Bangkok and beach holidays are now on offer from Destination Far East, with prices starting at £539 for ten nights in Thailand or a fortnight in the northern Malaysian resort, both with daily flights from Heathrow and Manchester. Details: 0171-400 7000.

NILE cruises are increasing in popularity again and Sealar is offering a week's full board on the Nile Elegance from £585 with a flight from Gatwick next Thursday and free excursions. Further Thursday departures are available next month and in March. Details: 01232 683500.

CARIBBEAN flight deals are few and far between in high season, but Unijet is offering Barbados for £279 return from Gatwick for those who want to get away on February 1 for a fortnight. Details: 08705 336336.

EAST AFRICA's most spectacular sites will be visited on a 27-day camping expedition with The Imaginative Traveler, which begins with a flight from Heathrow to Nairobi on February 2. National parks in

Kenya, the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania, Lake Malawi, the Victoria Falls, full board and a trip to Zanzibar are all included in the £965 price. Details: 0181-742 8612.

MIAMI's South Beach, popular with fashion photographers, is available at a discount with special offers for children from Funway Holidays until mid-March. A week at an oceanfront hotel costs from £539 with Virgin Atlantic flights from Gatwick and car hire. Details: 0181-466 0222.

PETRA, the rose-coloured city, oases, mountains and a restored 19th-century village feature in a Jordan Explorer tour with Bales Worldwide. Fly from Heathrow on February 22 and pay from £630 for the week's tour, sightseeing and B&B. Details: 01306 885991.

All prices based on two travelling together unless stated.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

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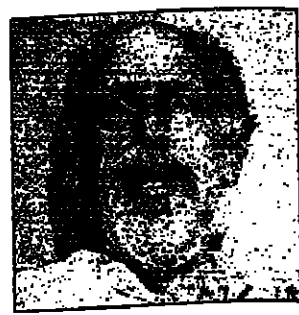
Barenboim displays a noble touch

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THE TIMES

ARTS

THEATRE



Fame crooks a finger at last

Everyone still calls it the Brats, but NME has quietly ditched its annual alternative awards show in favour of a TV documentary to be broadcast on Channel 4 next Wednesday. Meanwhile the traditional week of gigs at the Astoria sponsored by the nation's hippest music paper to celebrate "the best music of 1998" has been officially re-branded as the NME Carling Premier Shows.

A victim of its own success, the Brats became an anachronism thanks to the speed with which new and alternative music has been assimilated into the pop mainstream in the 1990s. Nowadays, to find something true to the indie aesthetic, it seems you have to look beyond the latest crop of young, British wannabes. Even so, the arrival on stage of American veterans Sebadoh as headliners on the opening night of the Premier Shows on Tuesday prompted a bizarre sense of déjà vu.

The group's singer and guitarist Lou Barlow was not unaware of the irony. "Pretty up-and-coming,"

POP

Sebadoh/Elliott Smith
Astoria, WC2

mumbled the shaggy-haired mainstay of a band which survived the grunge era and has its seventh album ready for release next month. Barlow and his longtime colleague Jason Loewenstein (bass and vocals) have clearly raised their musical sights of late, signing a major label contract and sacking their previous drummer because he was not a good enough musician. But their stage presentation was still a shambling, with much hanging around between numbers while guitars were endlessly retuned and faulty equipment bashed and kicked into service.

Their set alternated uncomfortably between the deft and thoughtful songs of Barlow and the baldly clamorous punk-rock statements of Loewenstein. When Barlow was in charge the trio scaled improbable

heights, especially with new songs such as the insistent rocker *Flame* and the transcendent rock-ballad *Love Is Stronger*. Above all there was an unshakable sense of integrity about their performance, as befits a band that has proved itself beyond any shadow of a doubt to be immune to the dictates of fashion. With just the smallest of tweaks they could become the new R.E.M. Barlow's music is certainly good enough.

The same could not be said of Elliott Smith, another American whose airy, Beatles-influenced tunes attracted much flattering comment in the music press last year. Supported by a limp rhythm section, the singer and guitarist from Portland, Oregon, preceded Sebadoh with a weary-sounding set that embodied the cliché of the sad indie loser. Some of his numbers had a pleasing harmonic ring, but given Smith's hangdog look, apologetic manner and negative stage presence, it hardly seemed to matter what he sang.

DAVID SINCLAIR

A taste of Romany cream

Tarat de Haidouks
Ronnie Scott's

previous appearances at the Barbican and the Festival Hall (in collaboration with the Kronos Quartet) the staid nature of the concert hall inhibited their passion. In the smoky den that is Ronnie Scott's they were better able to recapture the mood of the cellars and village halls they are accustomed to playing, and indulge their runaway, foot-stomping, swirling magic.

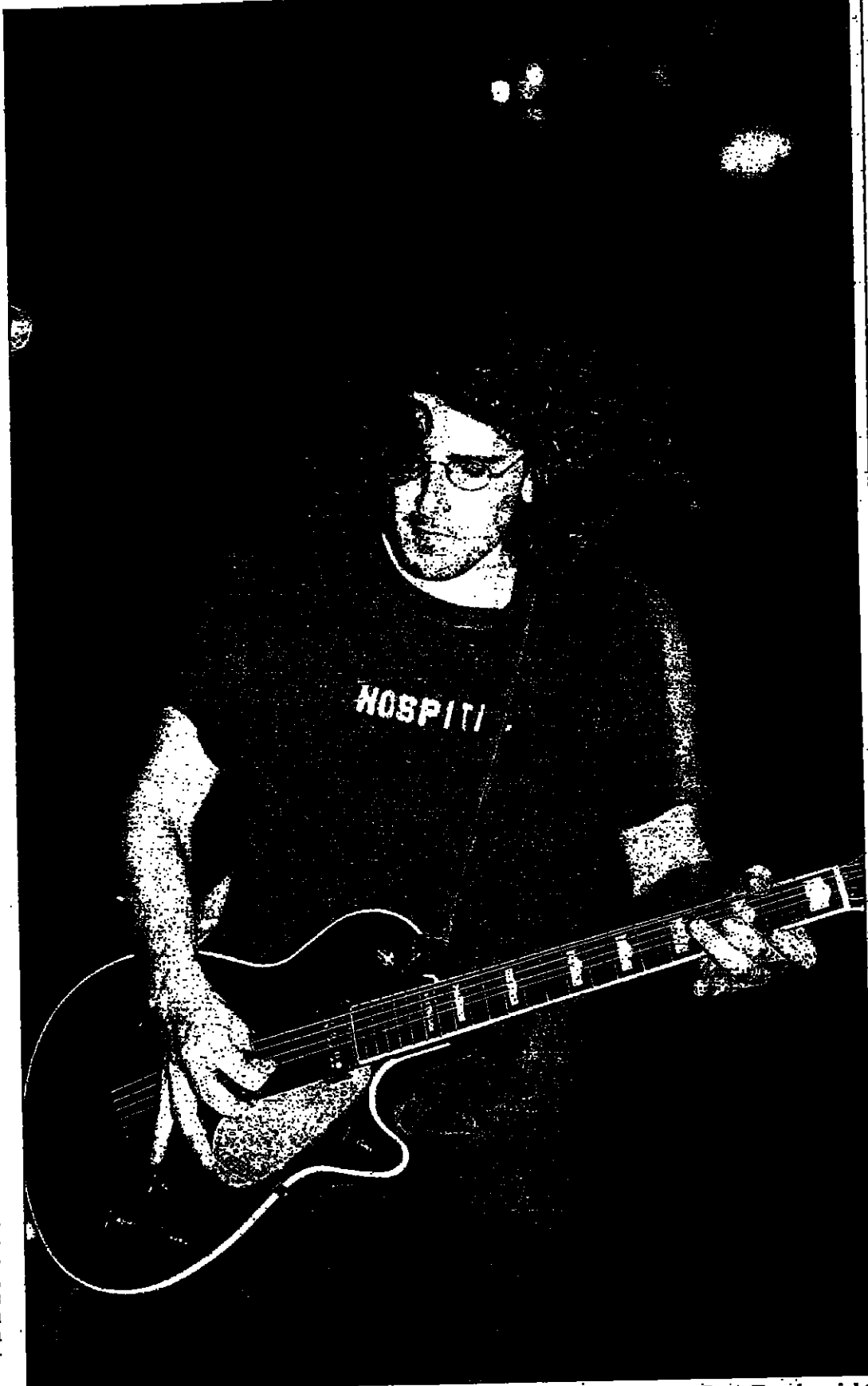
The 11-strong group has an age range that spans half a century, with the oldest approaching 80. For

the most part they appeared in a variety of smaller combinations to show off their instrumental skills. Spontaneous and given to outrageous improvisation, every teaming seemed to have an extraordinary musical alchemy.

The heartbeat throughout was provided by double bass and cimbalom, a large East European dulcimer that, when hammered vigorously, emits huge ripples of rhythm. They were joined by up to four violinists, three accordionists and a brace of full-throated singers. Sometimes passionate and soulful and at others mournful and reflective, their virtuosity was breathtaking and their sense of fun mischievous.

As for the music, it was as indefinable and itinerant as the gypsy spirit — Indian drones and Arabic quarter-tones, Slavonic folk dances and, at their most breathtaking, a kind of acoustic but explosive Balkan boogie. Don't miss. There's not a better night out to be had in London this week.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



Up-and-coming: Lou Barlow of Sebadoh lays a claim to R.E.M.'s crown at the Astoria on Tuesday night

Big, big band

THE idea that big bands are all about men with grey hair and red cummerbunds gets short shrift from the Andy Prior Orchestra. The music played may have been around for half a century, but most of the musicians scarcely looked old enough to remember the Beatles, let alone Tommy Dorsey.

The very mention of the trendy trombonist's name prompted gentle sighs of contentment around the auditorium — the core audience for this brand of dance band entertainment is well advanced in age. The task facing Prior — a single-minded Lancastrian who has kept an orchestra going for 15 years now — is how to cultivate a younger public without alienating the faithful.

It can be done. Some purists

JAZZ

were suspicious of Harry Connick Jr's matinee idol appeal, but the American singer has proved that vintage swing can still fill the Albert Hall. Prior's cheeky-chappy patter does not begin to compete with Connick in the charisma stakes. By far the weakest part of this concert lay in the redundant chat between numbers and the Ovaltine-like references to the "girls and boys in the band".

But catch Prior on his current tour — which runs beyond February — and you will hear some dazzlingly precise standards. Bryan Pendleton's orchestrations are perfectly tailored to the demands of the brass section. You get a couple of neatly reworked Glenn Miller war-horses for your money, but most of the evening is devoted to Prior's tribute to Sinatra, constructed around some eerily accurate evocations of Nelson Riddle's arrangements. Prior does not go for a precise impersonation of The Voice, but his phrasing on *I've Got The World On A String* or *Come Fly With Me* is unmistakably the same, and a first-rate sound mix ensured that he and his engaging guest vocalist Donna Canale were never overwhelmed. The most startling piece was an immaculate *Pennies From Heaven*. Musicianship as assured as this should never be hidden away in the "nostalgia" bin.

CLIVE DAVIS

Have cello, will go far

Winner of the Pierre Fournier Award in 1998, the cellist Alice Neary gave what was billed as her debut recital at a packed Wigmore Hall last Friday. Rarely can a debut have been attended by such a gathering of the great and good — clearly the word had got around. And Neary is indeed a player of the highest calibre: secure in technique and astonishingly mature in her musicianship.

Opening with one of the severest tests of the repertoire — unaccompanied Bach — she dispatched the Suite No 3 in C with impressive fluency and a grasp of the style from which some of her seniors of the old school could learn a lot. The harmonies implied in Bach's lines emerged clearly and accents were perfectly judged. Neary has the confidence to allow a phrase to hover for a fraction, subsequently picking up the thread without any unnatural break in the line.

In Samuel Barber's Cello Sonata in C Minor, Op 6, the sonorous tone she elicits from

CONCERTS

Alice Neary
Wigmore Hall

her 1720 Gagliano stood her in good stead for the lyrical cantabile that dominates this Romantically tonal work. *Das Buch* by the Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks even calls for the soloist to provide her own vocal accompaniment, which Neary (daughter of the organist Martin Neary) did to serene effect.

The "Fortissimo" movement is more aggressive and both here and in similar sections of Schnittke's Cello Sonata, intonation and tone occasionally came under pressure. But the tension and resolution of the Schnittke's outer movements were realised with eloquence.

In Beethoven's Cello Sonata in D, Op 102 No 2, with which the recital ended, Neary showed imagination of a high order in her response to the



Alice Neary: debut triumph

composer's varied modes of discourse. The first movement, for example, is strongly gestural: now commanding, now interrogatory or beseeching. Her ability to reflect every subtle twist of the argument with an eloquent turn of phrase marks her out as a player of rare gifts.

BARRY MILLINGTON

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra has just started on something that other, comparable British orchestras have more or less abandoned: a concert series devoted specifically to contemporary music. With its artistic director James MacMillan and other composers there to introduce the programmes, and with the orchestra ready to play extracts in illustration, the Discovery Series is clearly intended to be as audience-friendly as the RSO can get it.

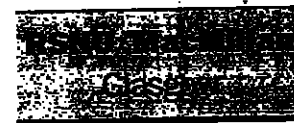
Certainly, in the second of this season's Discovery concerts in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, MacMillan's introduction to his own *Epitaphs* (which takes a lot of explaining on both the theological and the musical level) was thorough and illuminating. If Gerald Barry, a composer rather less given to exegesis, did not have so much to say, that in itself was a guide to the laconic quality of his two short pieces, *Diner* and *Flamboy*.

As for Sibelius, what he was doing in a concert given in association with the Celtic Connections Festival, MacMillan never actually made clear.

Look north for novelty

"Northern soul," he said twice, and we had to make do with that, trying to work out the relationship between Celtic and Finno-Ugric and not getting very far.

Actually, although he might well have done birdsong research in Brittany, Messiaen wasn't Celtic either. But the most obvious connection between the music of the Scottish MacMillan and the Irish Barry is Messiaen. Neither composer mentioned his name but, most clearly at the



beginning of *Diner* and in the celebratory final section of *Epitaphs*, the Messiaen influence is unmistakable — and, in that both Barry and MacMillan have made something quite personal of it, by no means unacceptable. Indeed, Barry's vivid postulation in *Diner* of a can-can as Mes-

siaen might have written one was such a joy that it earned instant forgiveness for the lumbering beast he less loose in his inexplicable *Flamboy*. Perhaps the RSO's performance, didn't do it full justice.

One reason for the presence here of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony was presumably that MacMillan wanted to conduct it. Although there is much else in the work that his interpretation scarcely hinted at, he did demonstrate its

long-term organic development — which is precisely what it has in common with his own Trumpet Concerto, *Epitaphs*.

Somewhat revised since its first performance at the Edinburgh Festival in 1993, and now supplied with two distinctly placed antiphonal piccolo trumpets to interact with the soloist in the closing section, it is an even more sensational sound than it was before. The soloist, for whom it was written and who seems to have no problem with its many technical and expressive challenges, was John Wallace.

GERALD LARNER

You are safe in our hands

Has the Arts Council treated our top orchestras badly? Far from it, says its chief executive, Peter Hewitt

The Arts Council's financial strategy is clear. It is to reward artistic innovation and excellence. It is to reward those who have managed the rigours of the past few years inventively. It is to help organisations with severe financial difficulty. And it is to create a new flexible fund to add to the lifeblood of the arts in the longer term — something the Arts Council has not had for many years.

The Arts Council received an increase of £29 million (a 15 per cent rise) in its grant-in-aid for 1999-2000. It put £7 million into that "lifeblood fund" and priorities for it will soon be decided. It will benefit both existing organisations, such as orchestras, and new activity.

Most of the rest was put into ongoing funding of arts organisations. This was partly delivered through substantial increases to regional arts boards. It did not give all arts organisations the same percentage increase but took a strategic approach informed by the circumstances of each organisation.

The Bournemouth Orchestras, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia and the Royal Philharmonic will see grants rise by 10 per cent or more in 1999-2000. As for the kind of sums being handed to the orchestras, the Bournemouth Orchestras will receive £1.8 million in

1999-2000, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic £1.56 million, CBSO £1.35 million, and the LSO £1.3 million.

Every funded orchestra will receive substantially more than inflation and some will receive many times an inflationary increase. Is this strategy incoherent or unfair?

From lottery funds the Arts Council also has at its disposal a stabilisation fund. This is to provide one-off assistance to allow organisations like orchestras to rethink and if necessary reorder their work to provide long-term development. That way, their demand on annual grant can be lessened and the orchestras' durability strengthened.

Three orchestras have already received large stabilisation grants: Bournemouth Orchestras £3.2 million; LSO £968,000; and Northern Sinfonia £1.7 million. Other orchestras will benefit similarly from stabilisation assist-

ance in future. It is true that stabilisation grants can only be released once the orchestra has been through the "rethinking" that is central to the stabilisation approach. But if this creates short-term difficulties the Arts Council has helped, and will continue to help, with cash advances and other assistance.

A case in question is the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. In recent months we have assisted the RLPO, which has fundamental financial problems, with cash advances on several occasions. I recently met the Merseyside Local Authorities and North West Arts Board with the RLPO and all agreed to look jointly at the RLPO's needs. I told those present we were very open to receiving a stabilisation application, assuming the orchestra was prepared to look radically at its options. Everyone left the meeting in determined mood to solve the issues together. Is

this an Arts Council acting unfairly or without strategy?

There have been concerns about the Arts Council's decision to delegate orchestras to regional arts boards. Delegation is not being done out of dogma, but because we believe it best for orchestras and their audiences. It is a fact that new and greater financial opportunities will in future exist at regional level. Therefore, orchestras will be best served if funded by RABs, with the Arts Council taking on a genuine strategic overview of orchestral provision. This strategic view will carry financial tests, as we are by far the largest financial stakeholder in RABs.

The delegation of 35 organisations, including the orchestras, is part of a process that began some years ago and which will continue: every organisation, regardless of type or size, will over time be delegated if that is the best way to serve artists and audiences. No organisations will be retained on the basis of "status". RABs already support work of national and international stature.

It should be clear, then, that orchestras are being managed within a clear and coherent Arts Council financial strategy. It is clear that they have benefited hugely from recent decisions, and they will, I am sure, continue to benefit significantly in future. Delegation is to their advantage. There is no cause for complaint.

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NEW MOVIES: In the new film about Jacqueline du Pré the first casualty of sibling rivalry is truth, says James Christopher

Sister act leads to sour finale

Anand Tucker's film, *Hilary and Jackie*, is generating as many howls of outrage as Margaret Cook's caustic confessions about the sex life of the Foreign Secretary. Based on the 1997 biography by Hilary and Peter du Pré, Tucker's film ostensibly celebrates the genius cellist Jacqueline du Pré and the volatile relationship she had with her older sister, Hilary.

The controversy started with the book, but it is fuelled here by a portrayal of Jacqueline that, if not deliberately vindictive, makes a cheap melodrama out of the life of an icon who died a slow, horrible death from multiple sclerosis in 1987. If you scrub Jackie's reputation, which the film continually invites you to do, you will apparently discover a spoilt, recklessly selfish, foul-mouthed schemer who bedded her sister's husband and preyed on her family's good will.

It's the familiar price of wayward geniuses in musical fictions such as Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* or Bernard Rose's *Immortal Beloved*. But it doesn't cut much ice here. If Hilary and Jackie were complete fictions they would be equally unbelievable, and the film equally lopsided. My beef is not so much with the accuracy of Hilary's biography, or even her murky reasons for wanting to publicise their differences, but the insipid way that Tucker paints his film as a two-sided story.

After an idyllic, close musical childhood, the lives of the musical siblings proceed from separate viewpoints. In Hilary's account, Jackie is a loose cannon: gifted, self-centred and disturbed. Their relationship is spookily intense, but entirely one-way. Constantly deferring to Jackie's blossoming career, Rachel Griffiths's struggling flautist Hilary loses her self-confidence and eventually her place at the Royal College of Music. When David Morrissey's bouncy conductor Kiffer swoops into Hilary's life and marries her in a romantic flurry, Jackie responds by marrying James Frain's hunky, unconventional swinger Daniel Barenboim. Hailed as the Arthur and Guinevere of classical music, they disappear into the glamorous distance.

The mythical reference is not without bite. When Jackie gets the first symptoms of MS, she arrives at Hilary and Kiffer's rural retreat. She begs to sleep with Kiffer (a Lancelot if ever there was one) and gets her wicked way at some cost to everyone but herself. The same episode is treated as a reasonable demand in Jackie's story, part of her need to constantly overshadow her sister.

The problem of course is that one never gets Jackie's true story, for the simple reason that she has never given it. Her film testimony is a nightmare of concert halls, boring receptions and loneliness.

Hilary and Jackie
Curzon Mayfair
15, 121 mins
Wildly misguided biopic of the late Jacqueline du Pré

Practical Magic
Warner West End
12, 104 mins
Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman put a hex on this comedy

Bulworth
Warner Village
West End, 18, 108 mins
Warren Beatty in farcical election triumph

Class Trip
15, 96 mins
ABC Shaftesbury Ave.
Intriguing French psycho-thriller

54
Virgin Haymarket
15, 104 mins
Fury fairytale about Manhattan's most famous disco

Polygraph
ICA, 103 mins
Stylish but impenetrable Canadian mystery

With eyes like bloodshot soup plates, Emily Watson's febrile Jackie bonds impressively with her cello while the camera swirls around her. But, implausibly, she treats her prodigious gift as a curse. The tragic way she is deserted by her talent and embraced by MS—dropping her bow mid-concerto, or urinating in her ballgown before a performance—is haphazardly linked to her disintegrating sanity and relationship with Barenboim.

Like the music, the fierce performances of Griffiths and Watson give a misleading sheen to this misguided melodrama. The abiding impression is of lives that have been bent out of shape to further the box-office ambitions of a mediocre film, rather than serve anything as interesting as truth.

Griffin Dunne's *Practical Magic* recovers the focus from a pair of first-class bitches to a pair of second-rate witches. Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman play chalk-and-cheese sisters brought up by two smug aunts with a ghastly taste in fright wigs. Three hundred years of witchcraft have done nothing for the family wardrobe, or the curse that dooms any man who falls in love with an Owens woman.

An unfortunate state of affairs for Bullock's perfectly nice husband, who gets flattened by a ten-ton truck in the first reel. Despite this brief tragedy, life continues as harmlessly as *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. The aunts (Dianne Wiest and Stockard Channing) make



Talented sisters caught in a tragic triangle: Jacqueline (Emily Watson) and Hilary (Rachel Griffiths) du Pré in Anand Tucker's well-acted but highly contentious *Hilary and Jackie*

love potions for their superstitious, hypocritical New England neighbours. The nieces dream of men they dare not love. Girl power, complete with soft rock anthems that will no doubt soon be numbingly looked so unmagical.

A film with infinitely more comic style is Warren Beatty's satire about political mendacity, *Bulworth*. We've been to this trough before with John Travolta in *Primary Colors*, Robert De Niro in *Wag the Dog* and Tim Robbins in *Bob Roberts*. Playing an American Senator whose election hopes are sinking, Beatty adds a novel spin to the grubby business of winning votes.

Bulworth has a nervous breakdown, hires a hitman to kill him, and promptly discovers a kamikaze freedom to tell unspeakable home truths to a bemused nation. He's nuts, of course. But the idea that a politician has to be insane to tell

the truth neatly bypasses the familiar Hollywood saga about media manipulation. Produced, written and directed by and starring Beatty, *Bulworth* is a shameless vehicle for the actor to flaunt his liberal credentials, and he revels in it. His crumpled hero is so busy being cool you can't help liking him. The sting, of course, is that having discovered a new zest for life, Bulworth spends his time running from back-firing cars and trying to lift the bounty he has put on his own head. It's not the most insightful or even original satire. But the anarchy makes it irresistible.

The joint winner of the Special Jury Prize at the 1998 Cannes festival, *Class Trip*, directed by Claude Miller (see interview below), is a quirky film about a school ski trip sabotaged by the morbid fears of a shy, friendless boy desperate to escape his meddling, over-protective father. Spooky stories about children kidnapped for their vital organs punctuate dormitory conversations. The mysterious disappearance of a local boy adds fuel to the speculation. The feeling that the holiday is going to end in an ugly mess hangs over the film like bad weather.

Old disco queens claim that if you remember what you did in Manhattan's most hedonistic nightclub, Studio 54, you

weren't really there. Unfortunately amnesia isn't a problem for Mark Christopher or his eminently forgettable film, *54*. In this 1979 fairytale, a star-eyed beefcake with dreams of glamour leaves his dreary New Jersey family, takes his clothes off and lands the job as chief bartender in the most exclusive, drug-crazed discotheque in the world.

While the rest of the class heads for the slopes, the sickly Nicolas (Clement van den Bergh) struggles with waking fantasies in which his travelling salesman father (François Roy) comes to various far-fetched gory deaths. What gives the film power is the way these scenes sit in stark contrast to the baffled concerns of the sympathetic teachers. Van den Bergh's almost expressionless Nicolas gives nothing away. His is a compelling performance in an oddly compelling film.

Old disco queens claim that if you remember what you did in Manhattan's most hedonistic nightclub, Studio 54, you

What keeps us fitfully entertained is the Olympian debauchery of Mike Myers's louche nightclub owner, Steve Rubell. An absolute ringer for the original Rubell, Myers's seedy homosexual comically snorts and bullies his way to ruin. When the tax inspectors arrive, Myers loses his chemical paradise and Philippe discovers his true destiny in the shape of a business degree course. The moral of this fantasia should not be wasted on Christopher: forget the job, get a life.

Eleven years ago the experimental Canadian director Robert Lepage grabbed the attention of British theatre critics with his slippery murder mystery *Polygraph*. His film of the play is no less impressive, and no less impenetrable. What it loses in poetry is made up by the way Lepage peers through grimy windows into the love lives and sanity of both suspects and slimy cops.

For a struggling student (Patrick Goyette), life's certainties are trashed by the inconclusive results of a lie detector test to determine whether he killed his girlfriend. Unknown to him, his neighbour, a freelance actress (Marie Brassard), has been cast as the victim in a film that reconstructs the crime. What follows is a macabre cat's cradle of teasing coincidences. Brassard has an affair with the forensic scientist who conducted the autopsy. Goyette, saddled by uncertainty, starts acting like a killer.

The film stalls over grainy attempts to relate the mystery to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Stylistically it is fascinating, playing with real-time conversations in restaurants while the kitchen and waiters are put on fast-forward. But serving up the suspense at intellectual arm's length cools one's ardour for Lepage's lofty ambitions, and inevitably the film itself.

French director Claude Miller isn't afraid of fear, as Nigel Cliff reports

The lord of misrule



Claude Miller on the set of his latest film *Class Trip*, which explores the traumatic world of childhood

The distinguished French director Claude Miller, though little known over here, has spent the past three decades quietly making himself a master of that most Gallic of genres, the psychological drama. Deceptively simple, sometimes slight, always intriguing, his films are all serpentine swarms of suppressed passions and festering fears. Not easy viewing, no doubt; but Miller has a way of projecting the inner lives of his characters, in unforgiving close-ups and telling silences, with an intensity and a sensitivity to emotional nuance that few can match. Not for nothing has he been called a French Bergman.

Assistant for a decade to his friend and mentor François Truffaut, Miller is nevertheless his own man. Truffaut's greatest gift, he says, was to teach him the importance of controlling his career by being author and producer as well as director of his films — "in a word, to be independent". Miller has not taken the advice lightly. His films invariably delve deep into his own obsessions, and slightly alarming they are too. Jealousy, insecurity, anxiety tend to be his characters' lot. His latest, *Class Trip*, though ostensibly a thriller, is no different. Joint winner of the Jury Prize at last year's Cannes Film Festival, its mysteries unfold amid the snowy wastes of a school ski trip. But the point of the film — is to explore, in a string of nightmarish flashbacks and macabre fantasies, the traumatised mind of Nicolas, a young boy whose apparently conventional father harbours a shameful and gruesome secret.

A less likely person to have such dark concerns you couldn't imagine. A benign and rumpled presence, all tousled grey hair and boyish enthusiasm, Miller readily ac-

knowledges his attraction to unhappy souls. "I've always been fascinated by the barbaric side of characters, and the violence they inflict on each other," he admits. "Well-adjusted people just aren't as interesting. For me, the point of being a film-maker is to pick up on dysfunction. The history of the cinema is the history of exposing people's secrets."

In particular, Miller has repeatedly returned to his favourite theme of the privacies and privations of childhood. *Class Trip* recalls his first feature, the coming-of-age drama *La Meilleure Façon de Marcher* (*The Best Way to Walk*), similarly set amid the swirling adolescent hormones of a boys' camp. So why this enduring fascination? "It's a form of voyeurism," the director offers. "There's a purity about children on the level of sensation that constantly intrigues me."

"I don't mean that children are angelic, perfect and pure — far from it. But they have a direct access to emotions. Even faced with evil, adults make many more compromises. Children's reactions are far more primal and violent. That makes their psyche an extremely absorbing fabric for a film-maker to work on."

Miller is renowned for cajoling compelling performances from his young actors. Nevertheless, he admits: "I can't honestly say I tremendously enjoy working with children. It's much easier with adults — there are endless possibilities for reciprocal seduction, for the game of relationships you play to take actors where you want to go. It just doesn't work with children — you have to be far more natural and direct."

Miller gleefully insists that he hasn't grown up yet himself. "I don't see myself as an adult, living in an adult world. I still think of myself as a child. I feel more comfortable depicting the mind and emotions of children than adults." This, he suggests, is why he is a film-maker. "There are two sorts of directors: those who deal with the world of adults as adults, and those who make films as a means of revisiting their childhood dreams. I think I fall into the second category."

So what new dreams does *Class Trip* revisit? Miller was especially attracted to the story (the film is based on a 1995 novel by Emmanuel Carrère) because it implies "that children are able to understand far more than we think of the adult world, although no words are spoken. They see the good, but they also feel the evil."

That idea gave him scope to dip into the stream of the unconsciousness. "I was very excited by the prospect of translating the book's mixture of fantasy, flashback and actuality into images. It's the same as when you fall asleep: you don't realise that you're slipping out of reality. I wanted to try to put that across in film, to blur the boundaries, so you feel the same intimate sensations as when you start to dream."

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Diary of a mad theatre man

Will the show go on? Kenneth Rea charts the obstacles to setting up his own drama company

Summer 1996: I'm in Tuscan working on a Renaissance play called *Gilgamesh* (The Deceived). It's a startling, sexy comedy about a teenage girl who dresses up as a boy to control the man she loves and eliminate his current girlfriend. Shakespeare adapted it as *Twelfth Night*, but where he used innuendo, this is uninhibited, joyous, in-your-face sex. What a dream, to do this in Britain. I could set up my own company. Madness, of course, to attempt it when public funding for new theatre ventures has virtually collapsed.

July 16, 1997: I hear that I've got a lottery grant to form a company: £5,000. Jet Theatre exists, and *The Deceived* can happen! I just need about another £20,000, so I send off 300 letters asking for sponsorship, to everyone from City livery companies to spaghetti manufacturers.

July 4: I've lined up a London theatre — the main house of the Riverside Studios. It has to be hired and they charge £3,000 a week.

Sept 21: Everything seems to be about money, which is slow coming in. Rejections from the Arts Council, London Arts Board and most of the trusts. I fire off a series of letters to influential people.

Oct 1: A letter from Adrian Noble at the RSC. "Dear Ken, Oh dear, this is an absolutely heart-breaking story. I honestly don't know what to suggest. It is without question an absolutely nightmare time trying to raise money; everybody's in competition with everybody else..."

Oct 5: The pre-London tour is almost lined up. Meanwhile, my board of directors advises that I find a patron whose name will add prestige when I write for money. There is one obvious choice. I phone Lady King, the agent of my former student, Ewan McGregor, to ask if she will send my letter inviting him to be patron. She agrees.

Oct 12: What joy! A cheque arrives from the Haberdashers' Company. Not all the money is raised but I must decide now whether to give up or take the risk and go ahead. I'll go ahead. Who dares wins.

Oct 14: I attend the BT National Connections press launch. The BT executive tells us how generous BT has been, but when I corner the PR lady and make a pitch for BT subsidising Jet Theatre's schools workshops, she backs away nervously. I talk to



Who was that masked man? Jet Theatre boss Kenneth Rea permits himself a nervous smile as some of his long-suffering actors take a break from rehearsals for *The Deceived*

Trevor Nunn about sponsorship, casually adding that my own group finds it difficult to break into the field. I mention my letter to him. He adopts a pained expression and says how sorry he is for us. I move on to a meeting with Phillip Spedding at the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts. It all sounds so easy.

Oct 26: No reaction from Ewan to my invitation for him to be patron. When I phone his agent to make sure he got the letter a man says: "Lindy's too busy to speak to you."

Nov 1: My wife wakes up and says: "I want you to put the house in my name."

Nov 11: The Italian Ambassador has accepted my invitation to the press night. I utter a series of joyous yelps. I'm not usually like this.

Nov 17: In Tottenham Court Road I pass a young beggar who asks for change. Hurrying on, I brood on the fact that I am doing basically the same thing, with basically the same results. I stop, walk back 50 yards and give him a pound.

Nov 18: An avalanche of invoices starts to pour through my letterbox.

Nov 24: I meet Ewan McGregor after his stirring performance in *Little Malcolm* at Hampstead. I buy him a beer, we chat over old times and I raise the subject of my letter inviting him to be patron. He never received it. Silently, I curse his agent. Nevertheless, he agrees on the spot to be the patron of Jet Theatre. We down our beers and go out into the night.

Nov 26: As I walk through the City, Phillip Spedding's words from the ABSA meeting toll in my ears: "We know the money's out there. There

was £95 million poured into the arts last year. It's just a matter of finding it." But where, Phillip?

Nov 28: A final phone call, then I punch the air and tell my wife I've got my cast together: ten really good actors. She suggests a cup of tea.

Dec 2: The first day of rehearsal. Everyone seems so happy to be working. After lunch I open a bottle of champagne to celebrate just having got this far.

Dec 7: A meeting with my bank manager. He won't give Jet Theatre an overdraft facility, but he's quite happy for me to fund it from my personal overdraft, once my savings run out. "I can never understand what makes you people want to do it," he says with a smile.

Dec 12: A week of rehearsals left. One of my older actors confesses to

me that he had a nervous breakdown three months ago. He thinks the symptoms are coming back and he can't go on. "I'm worried I might do a runner on the opening night," he tells me. I start phoning around to search for a 30-year-old actor who can start immediately.

Dec 23: Rehearsals have finished for the year. Our new actor has learnt the entire role within a week. What a pro!

Dec 31: My wife's birthday card to me depicts a man walking a tightrope into thin air.

Jan 5, 1999: Opening night at the Hawth in Crawley. The audience loves the show.

Jan 14: What a difference a few performances make. The production is growing beautifully as the actors relax into it. It's tighter, funnier and

more poignant: a celebration of love, sex and romance. But behind the scenes there is a temporary cash flow problem until we get paid from last week's theatre.

Jan 15: After a rousing performance to a packed house in Walton-on-Thames I tell the actors they may have to wait a few days for this week's pay. They are pretty upset. I promise to find the money.

Jan 18: While the set goes up at the Riverside Studios I'm still preoccupied with raising money. But against the odds, we've got a new company off the ground and the performances, so far, have gone over a treat. You take a risk and lay your self open. Then, if you were right, you bask in the warmth of laughter and applause. Sheer madness.

● *The Deceived* opens tonight at the Riverside Studios (0181-237 1111)

Staging a brave battle

Lodged deep in the memories of successive generations of British schoolchildren, William Golding's much-loved moral parable, which pokes a pitiless finger at the untutored actions of a group of boys stranded on a desert island, is hardly the easiest work to bring to the stage. Though they battle bravely, Pilot Theatre Company fail to work the necessary miracle. Based on his earlier adaptation for the RSC, Nigel Williams' script stays close to the text, retaining much of the dialogue and emphasising the pervasive allegory — the nature of unaccommodated man, the need for society to subjugate savagery, the struggle between democracy and autocracy, the roots of intolerance and war. Inevitably, though, much is lost in the translation, and the production does not always

THEATRE Lord of the Flies Lyric, Hammersmith

help to restore it. Far from giving a sense of the beautiful cruelty of a tropical Eden, the vaguely futuristic set makes few concessions to plausibility. In this case it is surely a basic requirement. The excellent lighting helps; the incessant smoke does not, nor the pumping soundtrack, all dance beats, electronic bleeps and garbled speech, which at best distracts and at worst drowns out the actors' voices. At least Marcus Romer's direction pulls no punches, and lands a good few. The atmosphere of fervid intensity never lets up, and it all becomes genuinely grisly towards the end. There is plenty of vim in the fights and chases, though they go on too long. The committed young actors put their all in. Neville Funnell as the porky democrat Piggy, stubbornly but fatefully insistent on the importance of meetings and the rules of debate, and Jonah Russell as the compromised but honourable Everyman figure Ralph, are both persuasive. Danny Nutt as Jack pulls off the hard task of making a plausible transformation from self-satisfied choir prefect to sinister and murderous tyrant, though he is a bit too fey to be entirely convincing. All are hamstrung by being a good decade older than the book requires.

NIGEL CLIFF

A peep through lace curtains

COMEDY: Clive Davis meets the man behind John Shuttleworth, the bumbling bard of Sheffield

Failure can sometimes be as good as success. That truth is illustrated by the acclaim for John Shuttleworth, the bumbling bard of Sheffield. Armed with a cheap electric keyboard, some gloriously inept ditties and a fund of DIY philosophy, the middle-aged ex-security guard understands the hopes and dreams of anyone who has wasted an afternoon in a quest for a packet of No 6 countersunk screws. Forget *Mondeo Man*. We are talking Austin Ambassador Man.

With his keyboard safely stowed away on the back seat, he has embarked on another national tour which includes a five-day stint amid the hurly-burly of Swinging London next week. The new show goes under the banner of *Ken's Karvery*, a title inspired by the eponymous character in John Shuttleworth's fictional manager Ken Worthington.

Graham Fellows, aka John Shuttleworth, is the actor who dreamt up this inspired parallel suburb. He was still working on the script in a Soho cafe last week. In front of him, an A4 pad was covered in scribbled thoughts and half-thoughts. A few minutes after I sat opposite him, he contrived to spill his glass of Coke across the whole lot.

Fellows — known to a generation of pop fans as the eternal loser Jilted John — slips in and out of character throughout the interview. When he is being himself, a frown invariably peeps out from under his blond fringe; he speaks in a measured, slightly lugubrious voice.

Shuttleworth is more halting, tossing out an idea and then circling it and prodding it in his timorous Yorkshire accent. When I mention that I have had trouble replacing my tape recorder he spins off on a beautifully detailed bit of whimsy on the theme of *Whatever Happened To Rumbelow?*

He once described his subject as "people with nothing to say who say it anyway". He picks up ideas everywhere, from a conversation overheard in the street to the request spot on the Steve Wright radio show. At home in Louth in Lincolnshire, he is always peeping through the metaphorical lace curtains, so it comes as no surprise to learn that he is a fan of Alan Bennett.

He enjoys pondering the connection. "Bennett probably spent a lot of time in boarding houses and the Brontë Rooms of posh hotels. John Shuttleworth is more used to walking the dog in poorly equipped parks. He's genteel but he's trying to embrace the younger generation and all these modern things like cappuccinos and mini-disc players."

The first eccentric seeds were planted in Fellows' youth. Having parents who were naturists obviously provided him with a head-start. He found more inspiration working behind the bar of a working men's club, chucking to himself when the punters asked for "a Mackeson in a lady's glass".

He also became a committed breeder of mice, travel-



Actor Graham Fellows, creator of John Shuttleworth

ling the locality with elderly enthusiasts who displayed all the deadly earnestness of miniature Shuttleworths. He once won second prize for his pink-eyed white.

After seeing Alan Rickman perform at the Crucible, Fellows decided that his future lay in acting. He studied at Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre (whose alumni include David Threlfall and Steve Coogan) but his ambitions were derailed by his unexpected success as a pseudo-punk rocker with Jilted John in 1978.

Every pop fan of a certain age knows the derivative chant "Gordon is a moron". Looking back, Fellows regards it all as a distraction from the stage. Being signed to a fair-shares-for-all "pseudo-Marx-

ist" record label meant that he earned no more than his drummer. And Jilted John remained a one-hit wonder.

Returning to acting, he muddled along, somehow managing to appear twice in *Coronation Street* as two separate characters. ("I kept quiet about my first appearance when I went back," he says, a sly smile on his face. "I'd like to go back a third time — maybe as Ashley Peacock's half-brother.")

After a spell in the dot-drum, Fellows first took Shuttleworth to the Edinburgh Fringe in 1992. Since then there have been sell-out tours, several excellent series on Radio 4 and some distinctive but rather uneven TV programmes. Fellows is still tempted by

the challenge of re-creating his characters on the screen, but he sees the advantage of relying on the power of words and the audience's imagination. It is one thing, he says, to sing the praises of making blanket boxes out of distressed pine; on TV, you have to let people see them, and that is never, ever as funny. He keeps his distance from the media goldfish bowl. The man who parodied punk worries about the mindlessness of much of our popular culture. So much so, in fact, that he has refused to appear on *The Big Breakfast* or *TFI Friday*. Good for him.

Chris Evans, he explains with a crisp Evans-ism, is "part of this dumbering down conspiracy on television. I can't stand it. The more people like Michael Palin go on *TFI Friday*, the more that dumbering down becomes entrenched."

Soon it will be time to head back to Lincolnshire, his home for the past four years. It is a long journey, and he and his wife had almost been snowed in that morning. But can you imagine Shuttleworth with a pied-à-terre in Bayswater?

"I walk down the street in the morning, and the butcher is standing on the street with his hands on his hips," Fellows says, almost dreamily. "People from Grimsby used to call Louth Trumpton Town. But I like living there. It shows you society working as it should."

● *Ken's Karvery*, Bloomsbury Theatre, London (0171-388 8822), Jan 26-30. Further tour dates include Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (01242 572573) Jan 31; City Varieties, Leeds (0113 2430808) Feb 3; Civic, Doncaster (01302 342344) Feb 4; Neptune Theatre, Liverpool (0151 709 7844) Feb 5

Weird side of the street

First, the company: Theatre de Complicite, playing on Shaftesbury Avenue for the first time, internationally renowned these 15 years for entering and presenting the inmost life of characters, animating inanimate objects, and turning text, performance, sound and a whirlwind physically into strong, dreamlike beauty. Now the author: Simon McBurney and Mark Wheatley have drawn on the life and writings of Bruno Schulz, born 1897 in Austrian Galicia and shot by a Nazi 50 years later in what had then become Poland (and is now Ukraine). He wrote only short stories, but in their dense, intoxicating sentences are recreated the physical feel and spiritual ache of a way of life that was disintegrating even as Schulz experienced it as a boy. *The Street of Crocodiles* is that area of his town, Drohobycz, already nastily modernised and bereft of the marvels, not to say magic, that

The Street of Crocodiles Queen's

he records as daily occurrences in the family home.

First performed at the National Theatre in 1992, the show has been influenced in its newest incarnation by the memories of survivors, mainly in New York, who were taught by Schulz, knew him or, in one extraordinary re-encounter, helped to bury his shattered body. Again the staging stretches back to the theatre's far wall down which, near the start of the play, a madonist figure slowly walks, disrupting our sense of space through 90 degrees and serving as herald to the fragments of time lost that will jostle through the mind of Joseph, Schulz's alter ego.

Played by the gaunt Cesar Sarachu, whose narrow head suggests a permanently astonished Stone Age flint, Joseph is sorting books in Nazi-occupied Poland when the memories whirl upon him. And in true Complicite fashion, since Joseph's Father (Matthew Scurlfield) takes a mad delight in his aviary, the books become flapping birds, held aloft in the performers' hands. A flock of birds sweeps across the stage, sending Joseph in flight before them.

To be brutally frank, Joseph is more weird than wonderful, likewise his Father, and it is permissible to feel that this production contains too many notes. But throughout the evening a movement in unison, a sudden emptying of the stage, a tremor of music (Lutoski, Schmittke) like a memory heard through a prism: such images and gestures crystallise one man's peculiar experience into a vision to be shared by all.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Moral bypass

our instructions were to find dead bodies. Tony Curran's horrifying Clint, the big man in her life, quickly establishes himself as brutally committed to Male Supremacy, and subsequent scenes only extend the limits of his brutality. I couldn't wait for him to be arrested and sent to the chair.

The police break in during an attempted rape in Alabama, and in the printed text this is a division between acts and the point where an interval would normally occur. Kathryn Hunter's production provides no interval. Scenes that have been smoothly segueing into each other now segue into police territory, and Lisa is content to reveal details of her life

with Clint. I say "content" because she is evidently not reluctant to do this, yet what Gilman reveals for us, and is so powerfully expressed in Olan's performance, is her frightening moral apathy.

It scares the police, it churns up the assumptions of her lawyer (Lorcan Cranitch, excellent) and it worries Lisa not at all. Soon we learn that it is not Clint who killed his victims, and that he may even escape being charged with rape. Has Lisa been traumatised by terror? It seems not. Gilman's exploration of this forlorn creature's assumptions becomes more and more absorbing.

The repugnance generated by the opening scenes allows the unanticipated emotions of the second half to achieve their full effect. Hunter is right to lead directly from one to the other in this unexpectedly subtle drama.

BOOKS

Patience after apartheid

F. W. de Klerk was born to power in South Africa but relinquished it gracefully, says R. W. Johnson

The full irony of how Frederik de Klerk became the midwife of black majority rule in South Africa is not always appreciated outside the country. For if anyone was born to rule, it was he. When he was only 12 his father masterminded the National Party's sweeping victory in the Transvaal which was the basis of the great victory of 1948. His uncle, the NP's Transvaal leader, Hans Strijdom, became a Cabinet minister and, in 1954, Prime Minister — appointing Jan de Klerk, F. W.'s father, a senator and a Cabinet minister. Jan — a passionate conservative, was one of the architects of apartheid and though he narrowly failed to be elected President in 1967, became president of the Senate and thus Acting President on occasion. As a child, F. W. would not only visit his uncle in the prime ministerial residences but would go on holiday with the PM and with the later State President, "Blackie" Swart. To top it all, his elder brother, Wimpie, was the editor of Verwoerd's old paper, *Die Transvaler*. F. W. naturally became an MP and was soon a Cabinet minister under Vorster — in whose Cabinet his father too had served.

All this is worth remembering as one reads about F. W.'s extremely difficult relationship with Mandela. Over and over again he recounts how Mandela would be all charm and reasonableness one minute and would then bitterly denounce him, often for things he had not done, the next. Worse, Mandela would give solemn commitments which he would simply walk away from and would repeatedly embarrass international

THE LAST TREK — A NEW BEGINNING
The Autobiography
By F. W. de Klerk
Macmillan, £20
ISBN 0 333 73264 2



hosts that they were meeting together by launching into long, personal tirades against de Klerk which de Klerk would patiently refrain from replying to. Mandela, de Klerk concluded, had a lot more bitterness welling up in him than was popularly supposed. But after what Africans had gone through under apartheid — not to mention what Mandela had personally gone through — it was always likely that someone was going to face a good deal of personally unreasonable behaviour as a result. De Klerk was actually a perfect representative of the Afrikaner ruling class and no doubt Mandela and his men could feel that such behaviour was historically, if not personally, deserved.

Although de Klerk is admirably frank and openly apologetic about apartheid there are still moments in this book when one wonders how sensitive he was to such feelings. He describes President Swart, for example, as "a very kind man". Others will remember

him for ever as a towering 6 ft 7 in giant standing up in the Senate brandishing a sjambok and saying that what certain Africans needed was a great deal more of it.

De Klerk had to put up with a great deal more from his predecessor, P. W. Botha. Botha emerges from these pages not just as an overbearing bully but simply as mad. De Klerk recounts how he went to see Botha in retirement to seek his co-operation in formulating the NP's submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Botha then claimed to be able to prove the existence of a sinister conspiracy called the New World Order, saying that de Klerk himself had been manipulated into joining it by P. W. Botha and George Bush.

De Klerk recounts in injured tones how he became the target of opportunity for all those — the TRC's Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine chief among them — who wished to play to the gallery by trying to harass him in to admissions of complicity in the under-cover activities of "third force" elements within the security forces, and how he had to put up with Judge Richard Goldstone, to whom he had given great power and prominence, grandstanding to the media. Certainly, it must have taken extraordinary patience to have guided the State through the turbulence of 1990-94 with the constitutional negotiations constantly at risk from the rising tide of violence and every sort of interest group tearing at his coat-tails. In the end, de Klerk has always been able to defend him-



De Klerk feels he has become a victim of the media in post-apartheid South Africa

self fairly convincingly against the charges of "third force" complicity — though, as he argues here, a number of powerful people quite close to him must have lied to him at crucial points. Indeed, no evidence has ever come to light which links the top brass, military or political, with the murderous hit squads operating at ground level. But then some things do remain secret: de Klerk, for example, offers no explanation as to why he protected many leading members of the ANC from exposure for

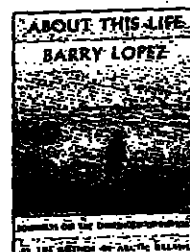
having worked as informers for the apartheid regime. De Klerk stands by his record in virtually every respect but admits that he failed to deliver the powersharing and federal model he constantly promised his supporters. Instead, he argues, the ANC's overweening majoritarianism produces "exactly the kind of alienation, division and mounting rage which now threatens our future success." He places his hopes on a complete reformation of the party system after the 1999 election.

His problem is that he was both the leader of his party and the father of transition. He feels the need to defend both, though he remains the target not only of those who fear the failure of either the party or the transition but also of the beneficiaries of transition. For they want to claim the transition as their victory and they are saddened by the sight of a Boer leader receiving the plaudits of the world — Nobel Prize and all — for having given them what they would rather have taken.

A long way from Walden

JENNY DISKI

ABOUT THIS LIFE
By Barry Lopez
Harvill, £12
ISBN 1 85046 585 X



Nature exists as it does for us because we have named and perceived it as such. We have no other way of grasping the world but through our own perception of it. It is odd, therefore, that it has become a stick with which we beat ourselves for being the successful, colonising species that we are, and that we had to have been in order to take such a patronising view of nature or anything else. Barry Lopez has collected together essays about his relations with the natural world which include coral spotting in the Caribbean, a trip to a famed beauty spot in Japan and driving around the United States.

What the essays have in common is his perception of a world that has been depleted of what is pure and unsullied by the greed of human materialism. His mood is mostly mournful, his meditations are on loss, his congratulations and his hopes are with those few individuals he finds who are trying to retrieve a concept of some ancient affinity between man and the planet.

There is a simplistic dichotomy decreed throughout the book between consumption and communion. A few naïfs, shaman-like, retain a capacity to do nature homage: a kiln-firer, untutored local historians and geographers, and Lopez himself. But for the most part people drive heartlessly past road kills, lose a sense of natural time (what is that?) by flying material goods all around the planet, and are disinclined to themselves for disdaining life by cutting down trees that house birds and insects because they want a bigger lawn.

Whatever is difficult to achieve, especially if it might have been done more easily, is applauded by Lopez. Indeed, difficulty itself is applauded, but only provided it appears to be natural difficulty. He is a pastoral mystic, entranced by the possibility of the salvific in his contact with nature, and for him illumination comes only through nature. But why should we expect nature to provide salvation for our very natural failings? And who is it

that supposes anyone beyond themselves requires saving?

The language is hushed and reverential and yet the feeling that comes across is of narcissism, as in a long essay that tells a rather overwrought and breathless tale of the biography of his own hands. The picture one gets of Barry Lopez from his own words is of a modern day Henry Thoreau tramping through the wild to proclaim humanity a poor thing compared with a ponderosa tree.

It is, however, a sentimental, deeply reactionary response to a world that contains computers making cyber-connections between individuals, as well as trees; where children die from road deaths and hunger, as well as furry animals. To privilege certain tragedies and joys over others is to be half-blind to the world. For Lopez, only a self-denying hero makes the ordinary vileness and inevitable shallowness of so much in human affairs — the coarseness and greed of life, the failure of ideals, the withering of our aspirations — seem forgivable, even inconsequential. How extraordinary for Lopez to feel himself in a position to forgive or let pass the failings of humanity. What arrogance. What a terrible distance from humanity it suggests.

Jenny Diski's book, *Skating To Antarctica*, is published by Granta, priced £6.99

Remember Dorothy

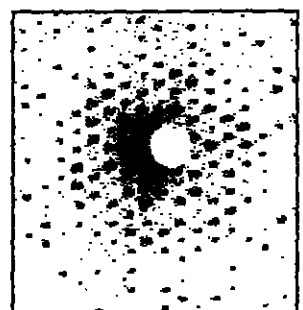
This biography of Dorothy Hodgkin, nee Crowfoot, who died in 1994 at the age of 84, is the tale of an ostensibly ordinary, yet actually extraordinary, individual. She was a chemist, then an X-ray crystallographer and the first and thus far only British woman to win a Nobel Prize for science. Georgina Ferry paints a vivid portrait of a woman passionately concerned to resolve the enigmas of chemical structures. She married, had three children, campaigned for socialist causes and peace, yet at the same time ran a laboratory in which flourished a number of other exceptional crystallographers under her tolerant yet authoritative leadership.

Her lab was referred to as "a haven of gender equality" and she encouraged many other women to enter the field. It seems, however, that her own children suffered from a certain amount of, not neglect, but lack of maternal attention, and it is clear that she could not have managed her research without a team of helpers — nannies, housekeepers and tenants — readily available in those days. We are led along the path of her life in meticulous detail, since Ferry has done her research in enormous depth.

The young Dorothy became one of the few girls reading chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford, in the late 1920s. Much credit must be given to the college as it emerges that she was staunchly supported there, both as a student and as a Fellow. It is amazing to discover that Dorothy remained a college Fellow for many years with no university post until finally being appointed to a lowly demonstratorship. This although she was already established as a crystallographer of international standing. She was ultimately elevated to the status of Wolfson Professor, but not until 1960.

Crucial to her development was a post-doctoral fellowship in the lab of "Sage" Bernal in Cambridge. Sage, a left-wing chemist, was hugely influential over all those engaged in

NANCY LANE
DOROTHY HODGKIN
A Life
By Georgina Ferry
Granta, £20
ISBN 1 85207 167 5



One of Dorothy Hodgkin's early insulin patterns

the early studies of crystal structure; he was also undoubtedly a charismatic man, and had a wide circle of women friends, lovers and colleagues, of whom, Ferry makes clear, Dorothy was one. Dorothy's marriage to Thomas Hodgkin in 1937 changed, but did not impair, her friendship and collaboration with Sage, which lasted until his death.

One of the first few women elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1947, given the Society's Royal Medal in 1956, and awarded a Nobel Prize in 1964 for solving the structures of penicillin and vitamin B12, Dorothy received the OM in 1965 and subsequently many other honours. Her important work for peace occurred in her latter years. Made an honorary Fellow of my own College, Girton, in Cambridge, she was unfailingly friendly and



Hodgkin with children Toby, Liz and Luke on her election to the Royal Society, 1947

interested in our Fellowship; we felt fortunate to meet her. A fascinating study of the development of UK crystallography during the 20th century, this book is, moreover, an extremely enjoyable read. One could carp at the occasional inaccuracy — Fred Sanger, OM, a double Nobel laureate, never accepted a knighthood — but these are rare. One is left with a memorable picture of a gentle woman of exceptional talent. "A Life", indeed.

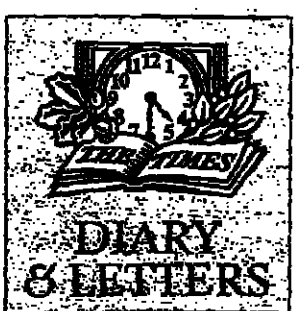
Nancy Lane is a cell biologist at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Girton College.

Bloomin' Bletchley

Those Bletchley code breakers still have a few tricks up their sleeves. Mavis Batey, who made an appearance on Channel 4's *Station X* on Tuesday — recalling her days as a clever cracker in Buckinghamshire — went on to less anonymous glory as a garden historian with her book, *Jane Austen and the English Landscape*, among others. In the autumn of this year she will continue her

decryption of the countryside with *Alexander Pope: Poetry and Landscape*, to be published by Barn Elms — who also gave us *Jane* — in September.

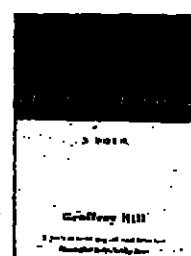
Today a solemn conclave of judges meets at Coutts Bank in the Strand to choose the winner of the £30,000 David Cohen Prize for British Literature 1999. The prize is given every two years to a writer for his or her life's work, and the



three winners so far have been V. S. Naipaul, Harold Pinter and Muriel Spark. The Savonrola-like chairman, the poet Andrew Motion, has wrung a

Laurel for an epic vision

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE
By Geoffrey Hill
Penguin, £9.99
ISBN 0 140 58910 4



breakers, the prophet Daniel, the martyr St Kenelm, Neville Chamberlain and Ralph Waldo Emerson join guiding angels in an epic cast. Hill's railing meditations roam across continents, creeds and disciplines: from Romney to Chikamauga, from Judaism to Anglicanism, from politics to painting to philosophy. His terrain is the moral landscape of history: the corruptions of the church, the terrors of the Holocaust, the betrayals of war.

Hill argues with the Jesuitical rigour of one who, never having spared himself, will not spare others. There are no excuses. "To have lost dignity is not the same as to be humbled," he insists. And his refusal to accept platitudes is disconcerting. But "for hardness of heart read costly dislike of cant", he explains.

Yet his aim is not condemnation but, like some Old Testament prophet, to crack open the conscience of the past, to awaken in a new generation the sensibility of the pain and sympathy that bring clarity of spirit. "Ingratitude" still gets to me, the unfairness, and waste of survival; a nation/with so many memorials but no memory.

Only by banishing this ingratitude, he suggests, can we fit into our historical context and find the dignity of love. The harsh terrain that he stumbles across comes increasingly to be seen "in cross section" as "rock strata" in which "particular grace/individual love, decency, endurance, are traceable across the fault".

Hill chisels at the rockface of language: "The struggle for a noble vernacular; this 'did not end with Petrarch', he writes. *The Triumph of Love* displays little of the mellifluous rhythms, the elegiac lyricism that haunts his earlier works. Rather, exciting, academic, unbending, it creates an unyielding memorial. It reveals a man who would not bend to the public demands of a laureateship, but is all the more worth reading for that.

solemn vow of secrecy about their deliberations from his 12 jurymen, who include Hermione Lee and Roy Foster and the actress Janet Suzman, and so far he has managed to keep them to it. But the prizegiving does not take place until March 18. Will they crack before then?

Now a trades union has taken up the cause of the sacked Oxford poets. On February 3, the managerial union MSF is organising a protest reading of 20 poets at the swinging Freud Café in Oxford, check by jowl with the

OUP building in Walton Street. Non-OUP poets are lending their support, and James Fenton and Tom Paulin will be there. The union is also concerned with redundancies of other OUP staff, including the editor of the art history series. The reading is at 7.30 — but we are told it is already a sell-out.

Write to: The Literary Editor, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9RN, fax 0171-782 5126, books@the-times.co.uk

BOOKS

Death doesn't always dress in black

Why are artists so often pale and interesting? Tuberculosis afflicted Chopin, Molière and Lawrence — and kills still

When John Keats saw the scarlet stain upon his handkerchief, he was also looking upon his own death. "Bring me a candle," he asked, "and let me see this blood." It was arterial blood, the vivid fruit of tuberculosis, otherwise known as consumption or the wasting sickness.

The disease, according to this absorbing if necessarily morbid history, has an illustrious provenance. It can be detected in prehistoric skeletons, and in 16th-century accounts of the King's Evil. But it really blossomed in the 19th century when it became the subject of art, opera and literature. It has enjoyed many curtain calls since, of course, and continued its dramatic career well into the 20th century within the impassioned works of George Orwell and D. H. Lawrence.

It was sometimes called "the white plague" or "the white death": white is the colour of innocence or virginity and tuberculosis seemed

unwittingly to strike, in the words of Thomas Mann, "the pure, the innocent and the beloved". Necessarily, too, there were religious connotations. It is significant and appropriate that both St Bernadette and St Teresa of Lisieux should join the ranks of the tubercular, since the disease itself seemed to encourage preternaturally vivid sensations; the fact that both ladies were part of a closed order of nuns, where the rate of infection was equalled only by that among prison inmates, may also have a bearing upon the matter.

But from the roll-call of the doomed and dying enumerated in this study, it would seem that tuberculosis had an especial fondness for artists and writers. Molière expired offstage while by unfortunate paradox playing the lead role in *Le malade imaginaire*; Spinoza collapsed under its burden, while Watteau died while painting pictures in the air with his finger. This may be an example of that "acutely height-

ened awareness" which tuberculosis can evoke, as well as a "foolish gaiety" in those that know they are coughing up their lifeblood.

Chopin and Schubert both heard unearthly melodies heralded by that cough, and it seems possible that the disease actively shaped the imaginations of those who had contracted it. It is hard to say how much of Paganini's extraordinarily vivacious playing came from his battle against death, but it is clear enough how consumption materially affected the fatal gloom of Orwell's 1934 as well as the hypersensitive fury of D.H. Lawrence's later works. Tuberculosis is one of those diseases which, in all its manifest phases, seems to illuminate the human condition itself.

The *White Death* is a model of how medical history ought to be written, lucid in its analysis and perspicacious in its commentary. The chapters on pathological symptoms are not for the squeamish, although they do have an astringent



Peter Ackroyd

effect upon a narrative which is almost too readable for its subject. Dormand's account of the research into the causes of TB has all the pace of a dramatic narrative, however, while the incidental players are brought to life with great panache. The author complains at one point that medical geniuses are hardly ever remembered, unlike

their musical or literary counterparts, but in this narrative he has done much to redress the balance.

The medical profession itself, however, hardly emerges in a flattering light. Dormand is a pathologist and regular contributor to *The Lancet*, but he is not kind to his forefathers. The history of medicine, in this account, is the history of vanity and ignorance. Apart from the few genuine researchers whose efforts are celebrated, most of the doctors in this history are revealed as quacks and charlatans who tried to conceal their ignorance with a condescending or imperious manner and obfuscatory language.

There were a bewildering number of treatments, many of them injurious or even fatal to the patient: the various injections into the windpipe, for example, included olive oil, iodides, dyes, creosote, copper cyanide and pig-spleen extracts. The truth is that most doctors simply did not know what they were doing; with all the false authority of an impressive manner, they misdiagnosed and mistreated many thousands of consumptives. The most disturbing chapters in this book are concerned

with the grotesque surgical experiments of the 19th and 20th centuries when the chests of patients were blown up with air or ripped to pieces. As with the more recent epidemic of AIDS, doctors made a specialty of killing rather than curing. Wherever victims of illness hear the words "expert" or "specialist", they should reach for their guns.

The book concludes with the unhappy warning that tuberculosis in its modern forms is "as untreatable as it had been when Keats had his first haemorrhage". In its arrivals and departures it remains as elusive and as inexplicable as ever. Despite medical advances, despite research and experiment, despite the self-confident pronouncements of scientists and physicians, the very stuff and texture of this mortal illness are still not understood. In that sense, as in many others, this extraordinary history may teach a little humility before the mysteries of life and of death.

THE WHITE DEATH
A History of Tuberculosis
By Thomas Dormand
Hambleton, £25
ISBN 1 85285 169 4



Hannibal Lecter beware

OBSESSION
By John Douglas and Mark Olschaker
Simon & Schuster, £16.99
ISBN 0 684 85147 4

THIS is a penny-dreadful for the Age of Anxiety: a fright ride through the careers of human predators, rapists, stalkers and serial killers. In *Cold Blood* has been overtaken by *The Silence of the Lambs* as the current cultural boiler-plate, and John Douglas, an exponent of "modern behavioural profiling of serial criminals", is the guy to give us the lowdown on Ted Bundy, Ed Gein and Gary Heidrich. "Manipulation, domination, control" are the watchwords, he says, of all sexual predators and, in a final chapter, he instructs women in these techniques as a means of fighting back. No mention here of men, or the sexual predations of Jeffrey Dahmer on young males.

Well-built

THE PENGUIN DICTIONARY OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
Penguin, £25.00
ISBN 0 67 088017 5

THIS fifth edition, edited by John Fleming, Hugh Honour and Nikolaus Pevsner, is significant for the inclusion of landscape architecture, its practitioners, theorists and modern development into business parks, motorways, theme parks and public parks. Modernism is pursued with the addition of topics such as Critical Regionalism, Deconstructivism, Facadism and other current hot topics. Radically, too, this edition has been reset and furnished with new line drawings. It is an indispensable reference work that revises previous entries without being revisionist and deals sensibly with the shock of the new. There is thankfully no entry for "heritage".

War story

KURDISTAN
By Jonathan C. Randal
Bloomsbury, £25
ISBN 0 7475 3636 8

RANDAL, the war-weary Washington Post foreign correspondent, noticed that the Kurds, the largest nomadic ethnic group in the world, were a constant element in all the stories he covered throughout the Middle East in the 1990s. They are generally portrayed as victims, but Randal notes their own record of betrayal and their violent internecine conflicts. He brings us news fresh from first-hand sources and his own experience of war, international diplomacy and politics. It's not a pretty story, but he tells it responsibly and without shirking the driest dilemmas of an apparently intractable and explosive situation.

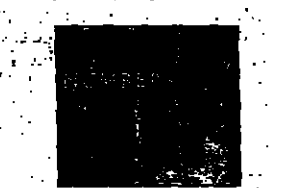
IAIN FINLAYSON

Into the counter culture

Mathematics is more than just numbers, says Marcus du Sautoy

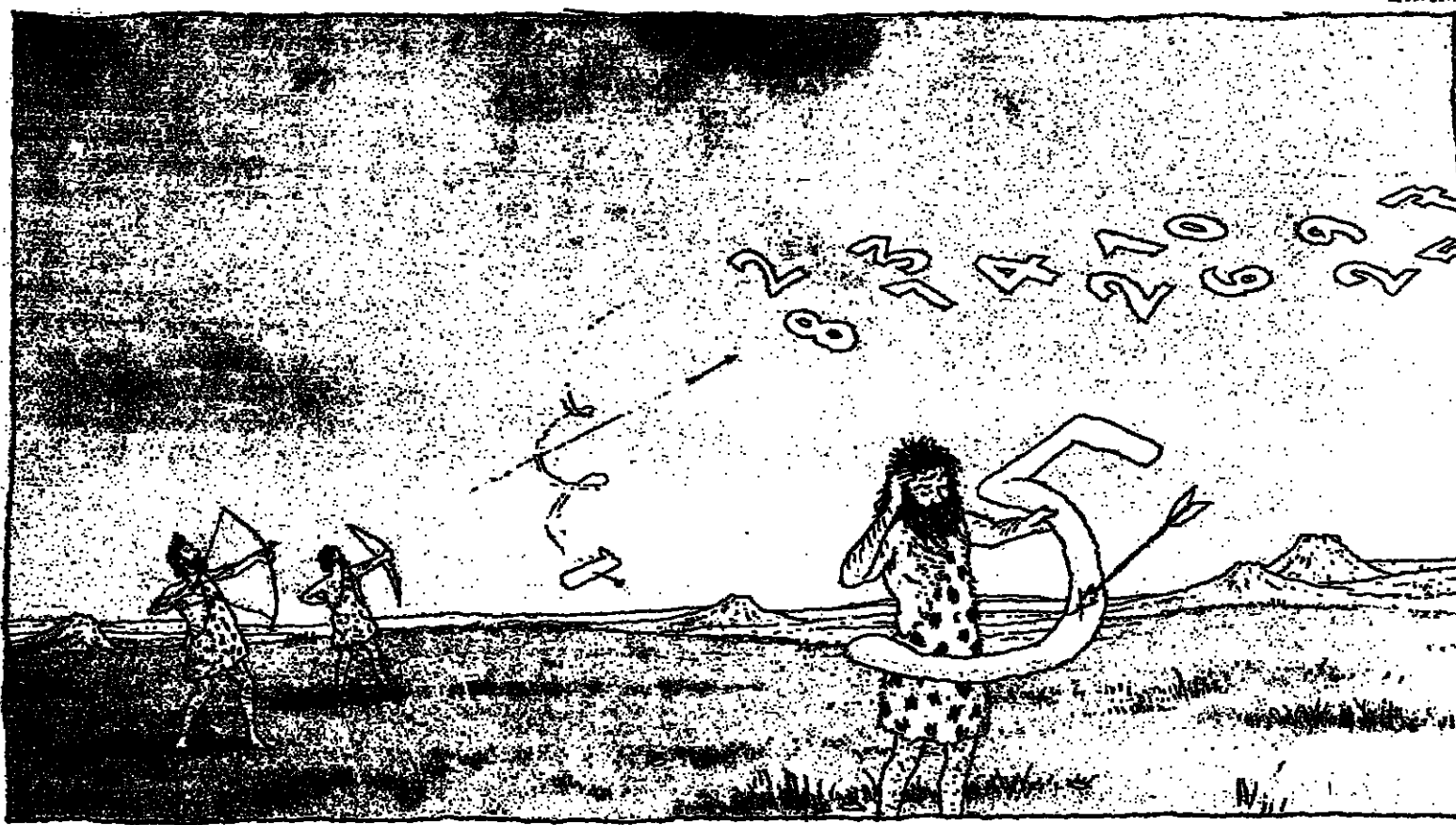
Where do numbers come from? The *Universal History of Numbers* is Georges Ifrah's monumental answer to the innocent question posed one day by a pupil in his mathematics lesson. Like many innocent questions that children can so easily ask, the answer demands a journey through the philosophical and cultural development of human thought.

THE UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF NUMBERS
By Georges Ifrah
Harvill, £19.99
ISBN 1 85046 324 X



material based on recent archaeological developments.

It is a fascinating journey taking us through many different cultures. As Ifrah writes: "To know how a people counts is to know what kind of people it is." For example, the achievement of Mayan civilisation is reflected in its rich number system used to chart time, which combined numbers in base 13



and base 20. These numbers have their origins in subtle movements of the Sun. At the other extreme, European culture comes off particularly badly in its resistance to the adoption of the number system we use today, brought by the Arabs from India. They remained wedded to Roman numerals despite the obvious difficulty that you soon encounter if you try to add CCLXVI and DCLX.

The development of a notation for zero, Ifrah contends, is one of the greatest achievements in the history of thought. It seems to have been independently discovered by three cultures in various different manifestations: the Babylonians, the Mayas and the Indians. For European culture the idea of zero came from India via the Arabs — although it was regarded as a thing of the devil and to be avoided at all

costs. The word "cipher" comes from the ancient word for zero and revives the memory of a time when zero was a dangerous secret that could have you burnt at the stake.

As interesting a story as this is, as a mathematician I find it an unsatisfactory record of the universal history of numbers. No musician would be happy with a history of music that gave only an account of the origins of the current notation used to write down music: there is a great deal more to it than that. There is so much music in the history of numbers that it is not even mentioned — for example, the behaviour of the prime numbers, which still remains one of the greatest mysteries of modern mathematics. Perhaps it is unfair to demand such a history, since the account of the origins of the notation itself takes some 600 pages.

However, it is one of the tragedies of the teaching of mathematics in schools that too many people are left with the impression that mathematics is all about such notation and research is at best long division to many decimal places. This book is an impressive record of where this notation comes from. But it is not for those who want to hear some of the truly beautiful music of mathematics.

Making a map for a nation with no borders

The first of the three essays in *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* by Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka (OUP, £16.99; ISBN 0 19 52205 4) deconstructs South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This noble but flawed experiment he sees as a crucible for all post-colonial African states, and runs the theme through the other essays — on the Senegalese poet, scholar and statesman Leopold Senghor, and "Negritude". Soyinka seems to identify forgiveness as being uniquely African, but without applauding it.

For how can truth without justice ever be a satisfying condition for reconciliation? If a moral society deplores the application of retroactive law, then how can pardoning crime through retroactive dispensation be acceptable? As South Africa teeters on the brink of the same chaos that has engulfed other African nations it is also in danger of sharing the same destiny unless reparations are paid. "The victims are alive and in need of rehabilitation while their violators pursue a privileged existence, secure in the spoils of their sordid history."

There are difficulties with this concept, however. How would "reconstitution after dispossession" work in countries where there is often no clear division between victim and violator? In South Africa the stand-off between whites and blacks has transmuted into a stand-off between coloureds and blacks; Muslim fundamentalists versus the gangsters. Widespread collabora-

tion with the European colonialists has helped to engender "new slavemasters in military uniform" who would simply squirrel away the spoils into their own offshore vaults.

His second essay, on Leopold Senghor, is driven by the same preoccupation with forgiveness. Senghor is a failed clergyman, who preached in verse. The parallel Soyinka draws with how Senghor's missed calling worked itself out in his poetry, and Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham City Jail is a bold imaginative leap. By saying "I accuse, but I forgive", both men anticipated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. King was pardoning white America while Senghor was granting France absolution; whether Soyinka approves of Senghor's Francophilia is difficult to assess, in part because his own writing is so overwrought that it is hard to see the wood for the trees.

In the third essay, on "Negritude", he asks: "What is Africa?" by first tracing the sources of nationalist amnesia: Marxism, Freudianism, Surrealism, and the camps of the assimilationists like Senghor and the rejectionists, like Léon Damas. But what is finally positive about the diaspora is the handshakes between the arts. Just as you can hear flamenco licks in West African mbalax and Cuban salsa, the literature of Francophone Africa and the Francophone Caribbean not only cross-fertilised each other but also the literature of the Harlem Renaissance. A similar crossover nev-



Truth first: Wole Soyinka

er really took place between the Anglophone Caribbean and black America on the one hand and Anglophone Africa on the other, because unlike France, Britain had no intention of sharing its ancestry with its African subjects.

A black culture now exists independent of place. Soyinka sees this maturation of "Negritude" art as the reconciliation, and ends this powerful collection with a story of how a 12th-century Mallam musical instrument, a balafon, came to be used in Paris during Senghor's 90th birthday celebration. Its very survival, modest construction and even more modest sound is a hopeful metaphor for the "near intolerable burden of memory".

RUSSELL
CELYN JONES

Family life and family strife

With their first novels, Benny Barbash and Catherine Chidgey have taken the advice of more experienced authors and written about what they know. The result is two portraits of family life in their respective countries.

Barbash's novel, *My First Story*, is narrated by Yotam Lazar, a ten-year-old boy who lives with his father, Assaf, and his mother, Alma, in Tel Aviv. Although the novel follows three generations of his family, it is the gradual disintegration of Assaf and Alma's marriage that binds it together. Assaf cannot commit himself to his wife and disappears periodically to live with his mistresses. On each occasion he returns to Alma, but the pattern repeats itself.

The family is also divided along political lines. Assaf's father, Zvi, is a Polish Jew who came to Israel at the end of the Second World War. He votes for the right-wing Likud party and takes a hawkish line on the Palestinian question. He is outraged by Assaf's comparison of the "unshaven arch-murderer" Arafat with the "freedom fighter" Begin, and he views his son's infidelities as evidence of the younger generation's lack of dutifulness.

Whenever the Lazar family gathers together, a row ensues. Yotam records each one on a Sony tape-player given to him by his father. His resulting narrative, consisting of his recordings, is a patchwork of speech. Like conversation, it is digressive: a political argument gives way to Zvi's account of how in 1945 he re-

JAMES
EVE
IN A FISHBONE CHURCH
By Catherine Chidgey
Picador, £14.99
ISBN 0 330 37179 7
MY FIRST SONY
By Benny Barbash
Review, £9.99
ISBN 0 7472 7315 4

turned to his birthplace, only to discover that his house had been confiscated and his family murdered.

Barbash is already an established playwright in Israel. It is not surprising, therefore, that he has chosen speech as the medium through which he reveals his characters. His choice of Yotam as the book's narrator is a clever one, too. Far less judgmental than his brother Shaul, Yotam is nonetheless old enough to comment on the breakdown of his family — with the objectivity of a dramatist. Through Yotam, Barbash explores 20th-century Jewish history and reveals the danger Israel now faces of tearing itself apart from within.

The waters of family life seem to run more smoothly in Catherine Chidgey's *In A Fishbone Church*, set in New Zealand from the early 1950s to the present. Beneath the surface, however, there is a dangerous undertow as generations of women struggle to break out of small-town life. The figure of Clifford Sillou dominates the first part of the

novel. Born in 1900, Clifford never ventures off the South Island. He hunts, drinks and worships, bullying his wife and insisting that his son, Gene, earns an honest buck as a construction worker rather than a fast one as a journalist. Gene's wife, Etta, experiences a different upbringing. The sketch of her harsh childhood contains some of the best writing in the novel, her sexual awakening as she bathes naked in a moonlit stream is less convincing. "She stands thigh-deep in water. Her legs are made of moon. The water flows between them." Marriage to the more worldly Gene means escape from her mother and a move to Wellington on the North Island. In the final stage of the book, Etta's children leave New Zealand altogether. Christina, their adopted daughter, becomes a doctor in Sydney, while Bridget, their natural child, goes to university in Berlin.

In its movement away from stifling provincialism and the emancipation of its female characters, Chidgey's novel is reminiscent of D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*. But her ending is more conciliatory. Gene's death provides a resolution to some of the tensions: Christina comes to terms with her adoption and her sense of herself as an outsider in the family. Despite the delicacy of her time-shifts, Chidgey's historical perspective is not as wide as Barbash's. She works with a smaller brush, but her compact canvas still contains some beautiful detail.

IN metro THIS SATURDAY

"Billy Connolly was my biggest influence": ALEX O'CONNELL meets Scottish poet and novelist Des Dillon
Also: the Beatles' break-up broken down and P. D. James tells metro how she writes

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BOOKS

A miracle that no one died

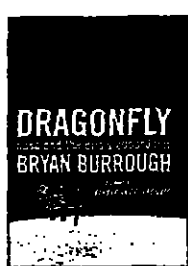
Grounded in fact: Nigel Hawkes on a book that spills the beans on safety in the space programme

Dramas in space seldom make good books, because they lack a chronicler with the gift of words and the willingness to use them. The American astronauts are tongue-tied by loyalty to colleagues and fear of a secretive bureaucracy with a long memory, the US space agency NASA. Russian cosmonauts may tell good stories in their cups, but not for publication. Norman Mailer and Tom Wolfe apart, the history of space travel is recorded in the language of test pilots, filtered by press officers, and published by robots.

It took the disastrous muddle of the American missions to *Mir*, and an extraordinary piece of reporting, to break the code of silence. Few things NASA has ever done were as poorly organised as its three-year involvement with the ageing Russian space station. At least two of the astronauts it sent there were psychologically unfit for the job, while the station itself was a death trap. Exhausted Russian crews worked around the clock to keep it functioning, while ground controllers at Star City near Moscow worked out ways of making the job even harder than it had to be.

So scarring was this experience to many of those involved that they have talked with remarkable frankness to Bryan Burrough, who originally intended to write an article for *Vanity Fair* and finished by writing a 400-page book. The

DRAGONFLY
Nasa and the Crisis
Aboard Mir
By Bryan Burrough
4th Estate, £17.99
ISBN 1 84115 087 8



astronauts, cosmonauts, ground crews and administrators appear to have cast off their customary caution, doubtless fearing that unless they put in their own two-pennyworth, the result would be even more damaging than it is.

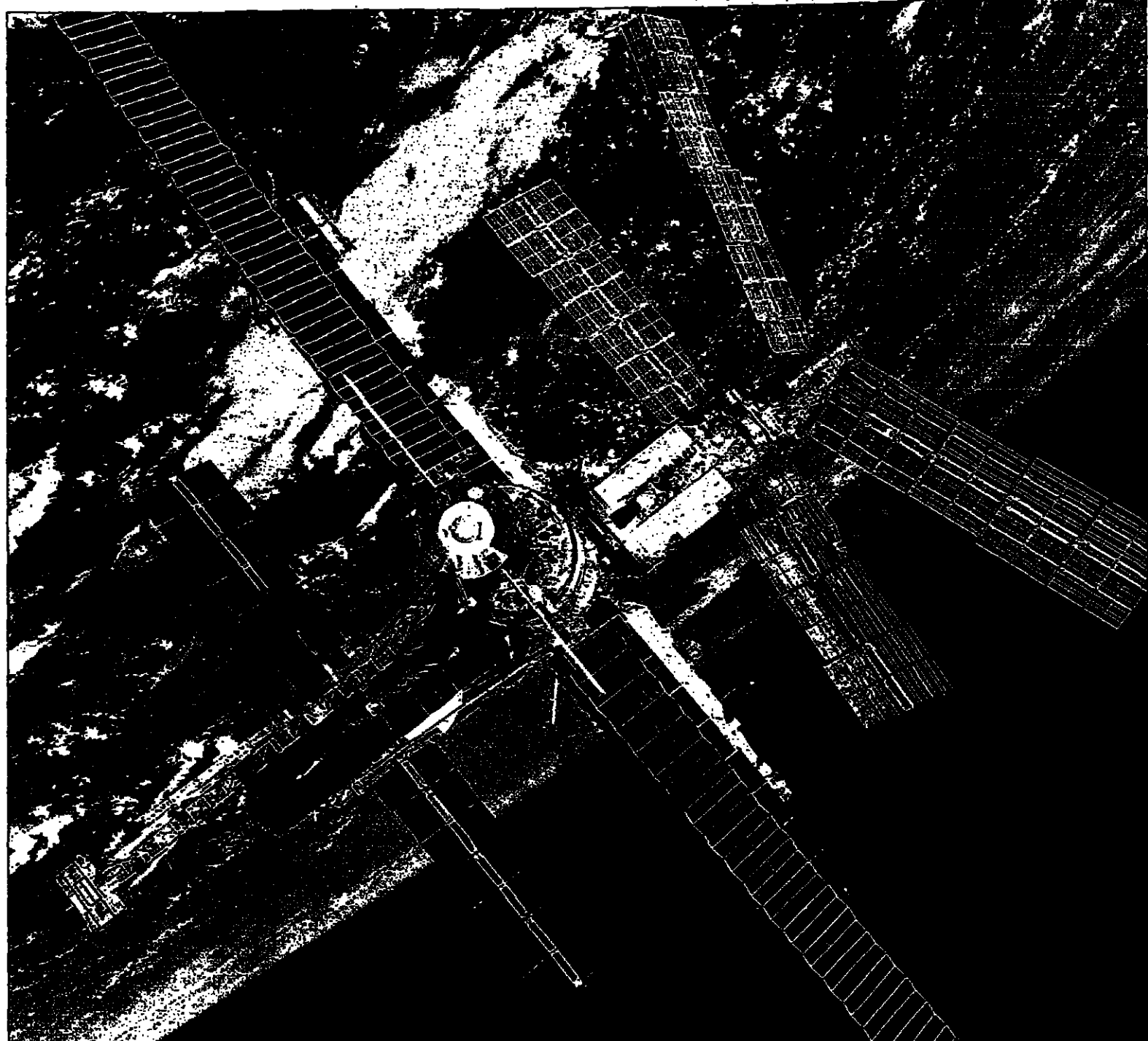
In truth there are few heroes in *Dragonfly*, apart from the overworked Russian crew of Vasily Tsibilyev and Aleksandr Lazutkin and the British-born astronaut Michael Foale, who shared *Mir*'s darkest moments with them. He must have come as a welcome relief to the Russians when he took over from Jerry Linenger, a man so wrapped up in himself that sharing a railway compartment with him would be a burden, never mind a space station in imminent danger. While the Russians struggled to put things right after a

fire, Linenger wrote sentimental letters to his infant son.

Worse was to follow. When Foale was aboard *Mir*, the Russians decided to test a manual docking of the cargo ship *Progress*, making it more of a challenge by leaving Tsibilyev without radar data on its distance and speed. He and Lazutkin were supposed to look out of *Mir*'s windows and assess the approach speed of *Progress* with a rangefinder and a stopwatch. The only problem was that it was obscured by *Mir*'s solar panels until it was almost upon them.

This mad experiment resembles nothing so much as the test that destroyed Unit 4 at Chernobyl nuclear power station: dangerous and pointless. *Progress* duly collided with *Mir* and Tsibilyev was blamed: the station was nearly destroyed. Foale redeemed the good name of NASA's astronauts by working alongside the Russians to save it.

After the *Challenger* disaster of 1986, NASA swore never to allow safety to be compromised again, but Burrough's book makes clear that they did so repeatedly during the *Mir* programme. A few brave people — mostly at the end of their NASA careers, and with no further favours expected — did speak out, but politics prevailed. The fear was that if NASA pulled out of the programme, it would lose Russian support for the International Space Station.



The crisis aboard *Mir* was caused when astronauts attempted to dock a cargo ship, using only a stopwatch and a rangefinder to judge its speed

The book raises serious questions about the safety of that programme. It is a powerful indictment of negligent administration and backstage point-scoring by both Americans and Russians. Many of those involved must be wondering if they did themselves any favours by talking so freely. Best of all, it restores the human dimension to manned space flight — all too human, indeed. It was a miracle nobody died.

Fiction that finds many forms

SCOTT BRADFIELD

THE FALL OF A SPARROW

By Robert Hellenga
Viking, £16.99
ISBN 0 670 88189 9



starts to rouse from the systematic doldrums of himself.

Woody's eventual dismissal from teaching leaves him free to attend the trial of the political extremists in Italy who may have been responsible for the murder of his daughter, and in the course of his journey, Woody reflects on subjects as diverse as free will and determinism, Plato and Dante, cookery and Freud, making his story reminiscent of such philosophical travelogues as *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

While this all reads effectively at the level of individual scenes and chapters, the overall story shifts gears too often, and what starts off as an Updickian campus novel eventually loses its way in a Michael Dibdin-style crime thriller. But despite these faults, Hellenga has written one of those rare modern novels that's not afraid both to think and feel.

ROBERT NYE

LONG JOHN SILVER

By Björn Larsson
Harvill Press, £10.99
ISBN 1 85046 539 0

THE UNBURIED

By Charles Palliser
Phoenix House, £16.99
ISBN 1 851591 27 6

Long John Silver is one of those fictional characters who walks right off the page because he seems so real. In fact, when *Treasure Island* was originally published in serial form, Robert Louis Stevenson called it *The Sea Cook* as if to acknowledge that the one-legged pirate was its true hero.

How did Silver lose his leg? That is the first mystery cleared up by Björn Larsson's entertaining novel, translated from the Swedish by Tom Goddes. Here the old villain, now in uneasy retirement attended by slaves on Madagascar, is allowed to tell his own story. Shot from behind by a disaffected member of his crew, Silver sees to it that this shipmate's leg is also sawn off, even though there is nothing wrong with it. Then he roasts the stump, earning his nickname, *Barbecue*.

Picking up every available clue from Stevenson, this reinvented Silver is certainly credible, although an increase of detail leaves him less charming than the original. A rollicking yarn with sufficient psychological complexity (and shipwrecks) to make it more likely to appeal even to readers who do not know *Treasure Island*, this novel will mean most to those able to enjoy the sophistication manifest in having Silver address himself half to his fellow fictional treasure-seeker Jim Hawkins and half to a fellow maker of truthful fictions about pirates and other criminals — Daniel Defoe, encountered by Silver in a London tavern where they have both gone to watch a public hanging. In short, it's a bold

act of imaginative piracy, a celebration of story-telling as an expression of the indomitability of the human spirit, a cunning pastiche of just about everything ever written concerning low life on the high seas.

Charles Palliser's *The Unburied* is also a literary treat. This is a murder story, complete with ghost, set in an English cathedral town in late Victorian times. Gas lamps hiss, floorboards creak, choirboys get beaten, and the corpse is found with its head bashed in. There's an evil small coming from the cathedral and interminable interludes in which people meet to talk about what happened 22 years before, or read each other passages from ancient manuscripts that may (or may not) illuminate the seething dark of their present predicament.

Palliser writes well, almost too well for the good of his plot, and the result is imbricate Jamesian — like M.R. James revamped by Henry James. But the novel becomes infected with the fog that pervades its narrative, getting so misty that before the end the reader has lost interest in who-dun-it and why.

Poetry happening at the zoo

My Life Asleep by Jo Shapcott (OUP, £6.99; ISBN 0 19 288103 5) is, at only 44 pages, on the short side, fully a quarter of them are given over to translations and adaptations.

As she has done before, notably in her celebrated *Mad Cow* sequence, Shapcott revels in shape-shifting. *My Life Asleep* begins with a sombre reading of Ovid's *Thetis* myth, and includes two more *Mad Cow* poems, as well as *Fig*, *Noah's Dove*, *Elephant Woman* and other parts of an extensive bestiary.

There is about Shapcott's poetry a passionate reticence. Once in disguise, though, pressed into other skins and other perspectives, she howls and sings. Her fugitive or centrifugal "I" roots out experience, tenderness and creatureliness in an array of eccentric forms. Her hedgehog hunts out "good slugs" and courts "the hurling mountain" of motor cars; her Brühlside is characteristically alert to the "most vivid ways to ripen," the



Tobias Hill at London Zoo. Photograph by Gill Allen

most vivid ways to rot." Of equal worth to the half-dozen best poems here is the sequence of *Roses*, taken from the late French poems of Rainer Maria Rilke. They are liberated translations, alchemised by her use of the first person: "Spinning in the wind/ so fast even the thrills/ my little petal-scarring insects/ you can't touch me/ without risking a thorn/ can only watch as my heart/ is shaken out into the world." *Zoo* (OUP, £6.99; ISBN 0 19 288102 7) is the second OUP book by Tobias Hill, who this year was the Writer in Residence

at London Zoo. Not that it's entirely at the service of his temporary employers. Rather, the title seems to express Hill's view of London, where he lives, and pursues — like his hero, Edward Hopper — his nocturnal investigations.

Hill is an interesting descriptive writer, but his poems seem to me to have more of what Malcolm Lowry called "design governing posture" than actual design. Notebook-like, they fill up with images. "Giraffes with swimming-pool skin" is a startling thought, and I like the blue "dollybird eyes" of a wolf, but I don't real-

ly want to bother with the rest of *Doctor Crippen in Love*. In the long run, and even in the short run — Hill has a novel coming out in the spring — his prose may offer more.

The Pamphlet (Anvil Press, £5; ISBN 0 85646 307 8) sounds as hip-ly and improbably definitive as the name of a night-spot, but it's only the title of the "interim selection" from Carol Ann Duffy, her first new poems since the multiply garlanded *Mean Time* of 1993. There are a dozen poems, but only one of them, *A Disbelief*, is strong enough to set beside her best. The others are so poor as to hurt her reputation. Her satire, in particular, has worn very thin, and when she uses clichés now it's not clear that it's to very much purpose: "Be handsome, beautiful, drop-dead/ gorgeous, keep away/ Read my lips/ No way. OK?" I hope she has better poems for *The Next Book*.

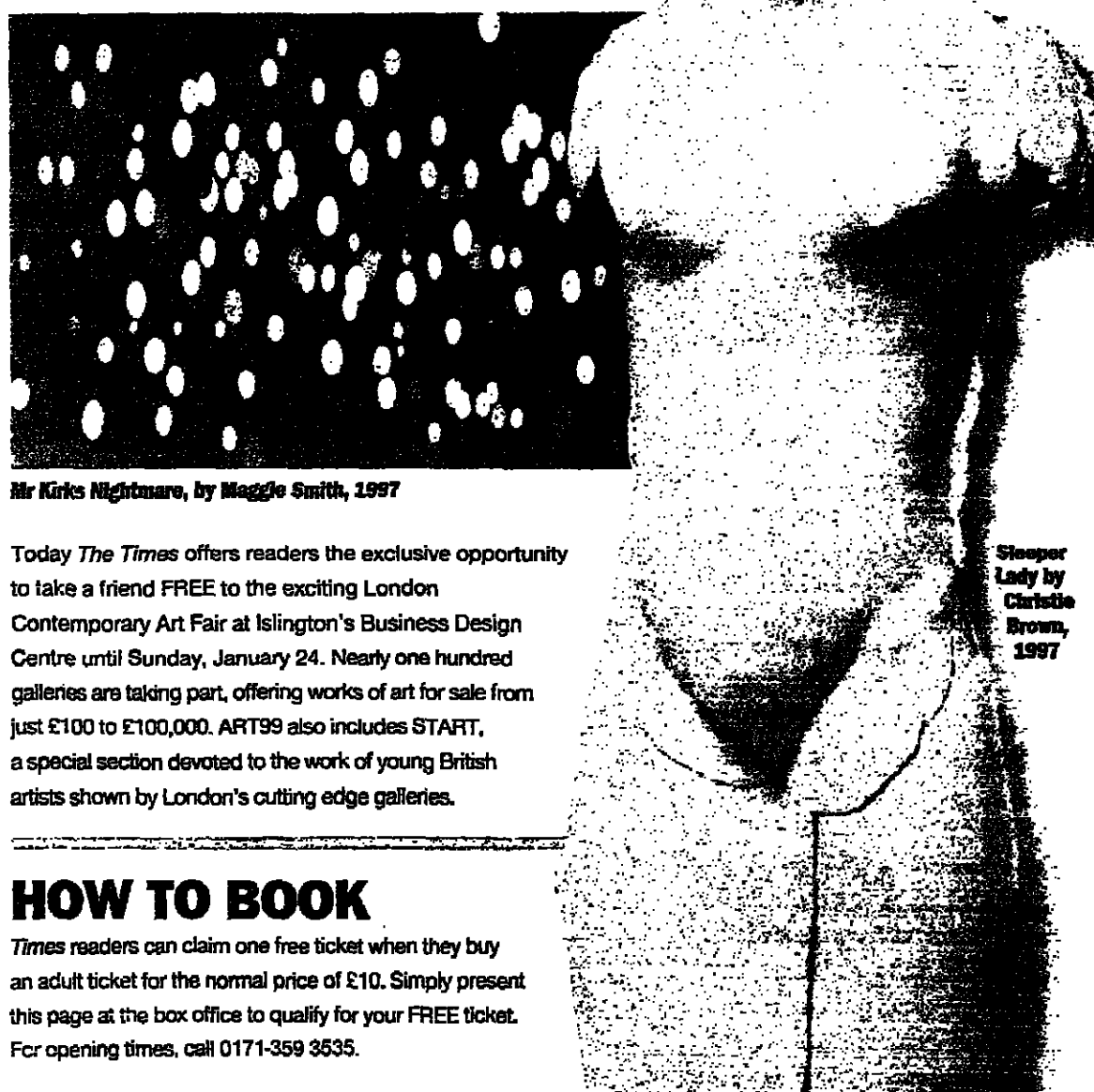
MICHAEL HOFMANN

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Sleeper Lady by Christine Brown, 1997

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CHANGING TIMES

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SEE THE BACK PAGE OF SECTION ONE FOR TODAY'S TOKEN

CHANGING TIMES

مذكرة من الإصحاح



Splashing out: the runners in the Woodhurst Handicap Hurdle have to contend with water on the track at Huntingdon yesterday. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

Egerton prospers as rates decline

THE sporting "anorak", whose judgment is based on a never-ending diet of statistics about runs per over, each set or putts per round, would recoil in horror at meeting Charlie Egerton, the engaging National Hunt trainer based at Chaddelworth, in Berkshire.

If ever there was living proof that the number-crunchers can get the wrong end of the stick, it is provided by the experience of "Edgy" over the past 18 months. In the 1997-98 season, he ended up with a winning strike-rate of 33 per cent — suggesting he had enjoyed a cracking run — compared to 28 per cent this term.

All of which proves the truth about lies, damned lies and statistics because last season was a nightmare for Egerton. His yard was savaged by a virus and Shadow Leader was killed in the Champion Hurdle, while this campaign is proving a joy.

"Strike-rates matter when your horses are ill or immature. I beat Venetia Williams's (strike-rate) last year — with the virus," Egerton, a man famous for his one-liners since his days at Eton, said. Summoned to

see his bank manager and informed that his overdraft was bigger than the bank manager's salary, he is reputed to have responded: "In which case you should get another job."

The real story behind the statistics is that Egerton not only displayed enormous patience to rescue 15 winners (and 13 seconds) from just 45 runners last season, he also demonstrated a skill for knowing when the horses were ready to perform to their best. This winter, the horses have been healthy so the task has been easier and more rewarding, with 12 winners so far and the promise of greater glory as the Festival meetings begin.

Dangerous President, whom Egerton bought as a yearling, has won four hurdle races for owner Chris Brasher and is now pencilled in for the Triumph Hurdle. Pandemonium, who runs at Ludlow today in the colours of the Elite Racing Club, has looked an above-average recruit to novice chasing and boasts Cheltenham entries, while Double Tempo, bought as an unbroken four-year-old, is another beginning to reward Egerton's patience.

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

Decoupage almost certainly has a big race in him if the rain gives way to offer the prospect of good ground. Star Mystery, his dark horse for the year, is scheduled to run shortly.

The loss of Shadow Leader last March — a year after Mysid suffered a fatal injury on the home gallops — was a dreadful blow, but time may



Egerton: patience rewarded

show that he could have an equal in Salazar. Formerly with Roger Charlton, the Sadler's Wells gelding won as he liked at Newbury before a slightly below-par effort behind Hideo-bound at Ascot. "At home, at this stage of his career, he is as nice a horse as I have ever had."

Having been a member of the Equestrian Society at Eton and a regular visitor to Newbury and assorted racetracks during term time, there was never much doubt as to Egerton's career path. A couple of years spent with Nick Clossie were followed by a stint as coffee boy at the British Bloodstock Agency, spells with Colin Hayes in Australia and Alan Stewart, before joining Rhydian Morgan-Jones, now a director of the British Horseracing Board, as a partner in a bloodstock company.

"When I first started training everyone thought it was a joke," he soon removed the smile from their faces by sending out a high percentage of winners from the 20 empty boxes on his late father's farm. He has 26 jumpers, six flat horses, and two ambitions: to build up the numbers and

RICHARD EVANS

Nags: COUNTRY KRIS (3.50 Taunton)

Country Kris has the invaluable assistance of Scamus Durack in this race for conditional jockeys, and looks fairly treated judged on his latest run when second at Ludlow.

NB: Lady Of Gormerston (3.10 Ludlow)

make it a dual purpose yard. "In the long term, I would like to train more flat horses."

In the meantime, he will do his utmost to boost the winners to runners ratio — to keep the anoraks happy. Winter Garden, formerly trained by Luca Cumani, emerged as a candidate for Cheltenham when winning by 12 lengths at Down Royal yesterday. "He will go for either the Supreme Novices' Hurdle or the Sun Alliance Novices' Hurdle," Noel Meade, the winning trainer, said.

Hurdles inspection at Ascot

NICK CHEYNE, the clerk of the course at Ascot, will hold an inspection at 8.00am today to determine the fate of the hurdle races on tomorrow's

The fixture, which originally featured the grade two PML Lightning Novices' Chase, now stages the Victor Chandler Chase, rescheduled from the abandoned meeting last Saturday.

Cheyne reports the chase course to be free from trouble, but parts of the hurdles track are unmanageable. Should it fail the inspection, the course will stage a five-race chase card.

No inspection has yet been called for tomorrow's other turf meeting, at Kelso, but clerk of the course Johnnie Fenwick-Clennell warned: "We had a shower this morning and we wouldn't want any more significant rain."

Although Haydock Park, due to stage the Peter Marsh Chase and Intercity Champion Hurdle Trial on Saturday, lost its last card to the weather, clerk of the course Philip Arkwright is upbeat about prospects for the weekend.

"It has taken the rain pretty well and we are all meeting," he said. "When our last meeting

was abandoned we did some pretty intensive work and it has worked. The going is soft, heavy in places."

Frank Pengelly, head groundsman at Kempton, forecast soft ground but no problems for Saturday's meeting, while at Catterick, also due to race on Saturday, a spokesman said: "The weather forecast is wet and windy and at the moment the going is soft, heavy in places. The ground is not that bad — we could have raced today."

There are no problems reported for today's turf meetings at Ludlow and Taunton.

LUDLOW

THUNDERER
1.10 FATHER KRISMAS (nap). 1.40 Tyle Steamer.
2.10 Bold Statement. 2.40 Bly. 3.10 Lady Of Gormerston. 3.40 Legal Right. 4.10 Some Operator.

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

1.10 MARSHBROOK MAIDEN HURDLE

(22.05a; 2m) (17 runners)
1-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1256-1257-1258-1259-1260-1261-1262-1263-1264-1265-1266-1267-1268-1269-1270-1271-1272-1273-1274-1275-1276-1277-1278-1279-1280-1281-1282-1283-1284-1285-1286-1287-1288-1289-1290-1291-1292-1293-1294-1295-1296-1297-1298-1299-1300-1301-1302-1303-1304-1305-1306-1307-1308-1309-1310-1311-1312-1313-1314-1315-1316-1317-1318-1319-1320-1321-1322-1323-1324-1325-1326-1327-1328-1329-1330-1331-1332-1333-1334-1335-1336-1337-1338-1339-1340-1341-1342-1343-1344-1345-1346-1347-1348-1349-1350-1351-1352-1353-1354-1355-1356-1357-1358-1359-1360-1361-1362-1363-1364-1365-1366-1367-1368-1369-1370-1371-1372-1373-1374-1375-1376-1377-1378-1379-1380-1381-1382-1383-1384-1385-1386-1387-1388-1389-1390-1391-1392-1393-1394-1395-1396-1397-1398-1399-1400-1401-1402-1403-1404-1405-1406-1407-1408-1409-1410-1411-1412-1413-1414-1415-1416-1417-1418-1419-1420-1421-1422-1423-1424-1425-1426-1427-1428-1429-1430-1431-1432-1433-1434-1435-1436-1437-1438-1439-1440-1441-1442-1443-1444-1445-1446-1447-1448-1449-1450-1451-1452-1453-1454-1455-1456-1457-1458-1459-1460-1461-1462-1463-1464-1465-1466-1467-1468-1469-1470-1471-1472-1473-1474-1475-1476-1477-1478-1479-1480-1481-1482-1483-1484-1485-1486-1487-1488-1489-1490-1491-1492-1493-1494-1495-1496-1497-1498-1499-1500-1501-1502-1503-1504-1505-1506-1507-1508-1509-1510-1511-1512-1513-1514-1515-1516-1517-1518-1519-1520-1521-1522-1523-1524-1525-1526-1527-1528-1529-1530-1531-1532-1533-1534-1535-1536-1537-1538-1539-1540-1541-1542-1543-1544-1545-1546-1547-1548-1549-1550-1551-1552-1553-1554-1555-1556-1557-1558-1559-1560-1561-1562-1563-1564-1565-1566-1567-1568-1569-1570-1571-1572-1573-1574-1575-1576-1577-1578-1579-1580-1581-1582-1583-1584-1585-1586-1587-1588-1589-1590-1591-1592-1593-1594-1595-1596-1597-1598-1599-1600-1601-1602-1603-1604-1605-1606-1607-1608-1609-1610-1611-1612-1613-1614-1615-1616-1617-1618-1619-1620-1621-1622-1623-1624-1625-1626-1627-1628-1629-1630-1631-1632-1633-1634-1635-1636-1637-1638-1639-1640-1641-1642-1643-1644-1645-1646-1647-1648-1649-1650-1651-1652-1653-1654-1655-1656-1657-1658-1659-1660-1661-1662-1663-1664-1665-1666-1667-1668-1669-1670-1671-1672-1673-1674-1675-1676-1677-1678-1679-1680-1681-1682-1683-1684-1685-1686-1687-1688-1689-1690-1691-1692-1693-1694-1695-1696-1697-1698-1699-1700-1701-1702-1703-1704-1705-1706-1707-1708-1709-1710-1711-1712-1713-1714-1715-1716-1717-1718-1719-1720-1721-1722-1723-1724-1725-1726-1727-1728-1729-1730-1731-1732-1733-1734-1735-1736-1737-1738-1739-1740-1741-1742-1743-1744-1745-1746-1747-1748-1749-1750-1751-1752-1753-1754-1755-1756-1757-1758-1759-1760-1761-1762-1763-1764-1765-1766-1767-1768-1769-1770-1771-1772-1773-1774-1775-1776-1777-1778-1779-1780-1781-1782-1783-1784-1785-1786-1787-1788-1789-1790-1791-1792-1793-1794-1795-1796-1797-1798-1799-1800-1801-1802-1803-1804-1805-1806-1807-1808-1809-1810-1811-1812-1813-1814-1815-1816-1817-1818-1819-1820-1821-1822-1823-1824-1825-1826-1827-1828-1829-1830-1831-1832-1833-1834-1835-1836-1837-1838-1839-1840-1841-1842-1843-1844-1845-1846-1847-1848-1849-1850-1851-1852-1853-1854-1855-1856-1857-1858-1859-1860-1861-1862-1863-1864-1865-1866-1867-1868-1869-1870-1871-1872-1873-1874-1875-1876-1877-1878-1879-1880-1881-1882-1883-1884-1885-1886-1887-1888-1889-1890-1891-1892-1893-1894-1895-1896-1897-1898-1899-1900-1901-1902-1903-1904-1905-1906-1907-1908-1909-1910-1911-1912-1913-1914-1915-1916-1917-1918-1919-1920-1921-1922-1923-1924-1925-1926-1927-1928-1929-1930-1931-1932-1933-1934-1935-1936-1937-1938-1939-1940-1941-1942-1943-1944-1945-1946-1947-1948-1949-1950-1951-1952-1953-1954-1955-1956-1957-1958-1959-1960-1961-1962-1963-1964-1965-1966-1967-1968-1969-1970-1971-1972-1973-1974-1975-1976-1977-1978-1979-1980-1981-1982-1983-1984-1985-1986-1987-1988-1989-1990-1991-1992-1993-1994-1995-1996-1997-1998-1999-2000-2001-2002-2003-2004-2005-2006-2007-2008-2009-2010-2011-2012-2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019-2020-2021-2022-2023-2024-2025-2026-2027-2028-2029-2030-2031-2032-2033-2034-2035-2036-2037-2038-2039-2040-2041-2042-2043-2044-2045-2046-2047-2048-2049-2050-2051-2052-2053-2054-2055-2056-2057-2058-2059-2060-2061-2062-2063-2064-2065-2066-2067-2068-2069-2070-2071-2072-2073-2074-2075-2076-2077-2078-2079-2080-2081-2082-2083-2084-2085-2086-2087-2088-2089-2090-2091-2092-2093-2094

Australian Open: Two fortuitous line-calls assist leading Briton's passage into third round

Henman struggles to assert his authority

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT IN MELBOURNE

AS THE scoreline suggests, Tim Henman's victory over Sandon Stolle in the second round of the Australian Open yesterday was a fraught encounter. He was taken to five sets and the win, which took him more than three hours to achieve, came at the expense of a wild-card entrant ranked No 240 in the world.

Despite two favourable line calls that gifted him the second set, Henman trailed by two sets to one against a man whose passage through the first round matched his best achievement in eight previous visits.

Henman has muddled through such matches before, of course — most notably when downing Paul Haarhuis at Wimbledon 19 months ago. He has also lost them, as he did, most pitifully, to Jerome Golmard in the first round here last year.

As he served the opening game of the fourth set, Henman's predicament was uncomfortable. His first service had been inaccurate, his second trampled underfoot by a rampant opponent. While his groundstrokes were adequate, his touch at the net was strangely lacking.

That service game quickly advanced his predicament from uncomfortable to dire. Irritated by the incessant whirl of a camera high up in the stadium, he promptly served a double fault to trail 40-30. That sort of distraction would previously have shredded his concentration. Indeed, it was after Golmard had had some blisters pierced in the deciding set last year that Henman, unsettled by the delay, came out and served a shocking game to lose the match.

This time he composed himself, fended off a further two break points in taking the game, and quickly brought a sense of order to a match that was slipping away. From that moment he was never going to lose — and Stolle knew it. "They say that the better player usually wins over five sets," the Australian said. "That is exactly what happened today."

Although accurate, it was a magnanimous comment from Stolle, who was robbed of the second set by two rogue line-

calls when serving at deuce and 5-6. A very late call deprived him of an ace that Henman later conceded was good and Stolle promptly double-faulted. At set point, a forehand from Henman bounced long, but was called in. Stolle looked devastated.

We can now reflect on those slices of good fortune because of Henman's victory. The detail could otherwise have been lost in a morass of double faults, forehands missed and chances spurned en route to a mind-numbing defeat. Happily, that was averted.

Reflecting on his victory by 4-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1, 6-4, Henman said: "At the start, I was perhaps trying too hard and getting a little bit uptight with some of my shots. I made life difficult for myself in the first three sets, but I relaxed in the fourth and fifth sets to turn it round." In his quest for a quickfire start, he spent too much adrenalin and was unable to establish a rhythm.

Henman's reward is a third-round joust with Marc Rosset, an occasional doubles partner. The pair have met twice previously, with Henman triumphing most recently in the final of the 1997 Tashkent tournament.

While Henman was preparing himself for his next match, Alex Corretja, the highest seed to start the tournament, was on his way back to Spain after a lacklustre display that ended in defeat at the hands of Christian Ruud, of Norway. Corretja, a renowned clay-court player, has become adept at beating hard-court



Henman was at full stretch to make this return against Stolle, a lowly-ranked Australian, who kept him on court for over three hours. Photograph: Tom Szukowenyl

specialists on their favoured surface. He struggles, however, when confronted by one of his own kind.

He and Ruud, world-ranked No 86, engaged in countless looping rallies. The Spaniard, seeded No 2, was not inclined to approach the net and paid the price. Ruud displaying greater consistency in winning 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. The last two points provided a succinct

summary of an insipid contest. The penultimate point saw Corretja net a passing shot on the 54th stroke of the rally and the match ended when he mishit a forehand on the thirtieth stroke of yet another extended rally. His tame exit means that only two survivors, Pat Rafter and Andre Agassi, are seeded higher than Henman, who remains on course for a projected quarter-

final clash with one of Pat Rafter, Mark Philippoussis or Thomas Enqvist. Philippoussis, seeded No 14, came through a gruelling duel with Michael Chang 7-5, 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 7-5, while Enqvist maintained his impressive form by dismissing Byron Black, of Zimbabwe, 7-6, 7-6, 6-0.

Marat Safin, the dangerous Russian, is quietly compiling a grand-slam record of repute.

RESULTS FROM MELBOURNE

MEN

SINGLES: Second round: K. Kuwera (Slovakia) bt D. Sanguinetti (It) 7-5, 6-1, 6-4; M. Rosset (Switz) bt J. Knappe (Ger) 6-7, 7-6(1), 6-3; J. Tarras (US) bt P. Haarhuis (Hol) 6-1, 3-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-0; A. He (Aus) bt J. Golmard (Fr) 4-6, 7-6, 6-4, 6-4; M. Tilden (Swi) bt J. Cornille (US) 6-3, 6-4, 6-1; W. Ferreira (SA) bt D. Vacek (Cz) 6-4, 2-6, 6-3, 6-1; T. Henman (GB) bt S. Stolle (Aus) 4-6, 7-5, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; T. Enqvist (Swe) bt B. Black (Zim) 7-6, 7-6, 6-0; B. Ljubicic (Cz) bt A. Cherkasov (Russ) 7-6, 4-6, 6-7(6), 6-1; A. Huesler (Hol) bt M. Zisonek (Arg) 6-3, 6-2, 7-5; M. Safin (Russ) bt G. Kuerten (Bel) 6-3, 5-7, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; C. Ruud (Nor) bt A. Corretja (Sp) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; N. Lapenthi (Ec) bt M. Norman (Swe) 7-6, 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4; M. Philippoussis (Aus) bt M. Chang (US) 7-6, 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 7-5; J. Knappe (Slovakia) bt M. Puetz (Arg) 3-6, 4-6, 7-6, 6-4, 6-1; P. Rafter (Aus) bt M. Woodbridge (Aus) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

DOUBLES: First round: D. Adams and J. L. de Jager (SA) bt S. Tabb (SA) and S. Donald (Cz) 6-3, 6-4; S. Druker and L. Hewitt (Aus) bt M. Hood and S. Pisto (Arg) 7-5, 2-6, 7-2; J. Novak and D. Rik (Cz) bt B. Coupe and G. Grant (US) 6-1, 4-6, 6-4; Y. Kishinokov (Russ) and D. Vacek (Cz) bt S. Green (Hol) and C. Corretja (Sp) 6-4, 2-6, 6-3; E. Ferreira (SA) and R. Lesh (SA) bt T. Archer (Cz) and A. Martin (Sp) 6-3, 6-4; T. Kemper and J. Semerik (Hol) bt G. Kovacs and A. Savot (Hung) 6-7, 6-2, 11-9; O. Dabine and F. Santoro (Fr) bt N. Broad and B. Richardson (GB) 6-7, 6-3, 6-3; G. Doyle and B. Ellwood (Aus) bt D. Johnson and F. Montana (US) 7-5, 6-3; M. Nery (Bel) and A. O. hovsky (Russ) bt J. Eagle (Aus) and J. Grant (US) 6-3, 3-6, 6-1; C. Haggard (SA) and P. Hyslop (Swe) bt M. Dondovic (Vug) and L. Pirek (Bel) 6-3, 6-3; A. Nalov (Mold) and M. Kohlmann (Ger) bt M. Barnard and P. Rosner (SA) 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

WOMEN

SINGLES: Second round: S. Piechke (Austria) bt A. Huber (Ger) 6-7, 6-3, 7-5; D. van Rossum (Bel) bt S. Woodbridge (Hol) 7-6, 6-0; M. Drake (Can) bt R. McQuillan (Aus) 7-6, 4-6, 6-2; E. Loh (Fr) bt A. Smeshnova (Ser) 1-6, 6-2, 6-0; M. A. Sánchez (Lando) bt J. Capriati (US) 7-6, 6-2; L. Davion (US) bt F. Labat (Arg) 6-2, 6-1; J. Novak (Cz) bt H. Nagyova (Slovakia) 6-4, 2-6, 6-3; C. Martínez (Sp) bt A. Rogger (US) 6-0, 6-4; N. Pratt (Aus) bt S. Smith (GB) 6-4, 6-4; C. Rubin (US) bt E. Wiegner (Ger) 4-6, 7-5, 6-2; R. Hirschi (Swe) bt L. Gherardi (Fr) 6-7, 6-4, 6-3; A. Mauresmo (Aust) bt P. Schryder (Switz) 6-7, 6-4; S. N. Overton (Sai) bt M. Tu (US) 6-3, 7-5; J. McHardy (Can) bt C. Ciesie (Pol) 6-7, 6-3, 6-1; R. Dragovic (Croat) bt J. Chv (US) 6-1, 6-2; V. Williams (US) bt A. Carlson (Swe) 6-2, 6-1.

DOUBLES: First round: L. Courtois (Bel) and N. de Villiers (SA) bt Cho Yoon-Jeong and Park Sung-Hye (S Kor) 7-6, 6-3; A. Giamberini (Aus) and S. Stewart (Aus) bt R. Beckova (Cz) and D. Jones (Aus) 6-2, 6-3; S. Appelmans (Bel) and M. Orensma (Hol) bt M. Sasse and Y. Yoshida (Japan) 6-4, 6-4; M. J. Fernandez and C. Morru (US) bt A. Elwood and A. Mok (Aus) 6-1, 6-2; C. Singer (Ger) and H. Vidovic (Cz) bt M. Lucic (Cz) and M. Plesco (Fr) 6-2, 6-2; L. Neiland (Lat) and A. Sánchez (Vene) bt E. Dominkovic and C. Watson (Aus) 6-3, 6-4; M. Hines (Sai) and A. Kournikova (Russ) bt E. Melichrova (Cz) and J. Pulin (GB) 6-3, 6-0; R. Hsieh (Japan) and L. McShane (Aus) bt E. Bes (Sp) and S. Kventchava (Gru) 7-6, 7-5; E. Likhovtseva (Russ) and A. Sugiyama (Japan) bt L. Lee (US) and P. Strydom (Sai) 6-3, 6-3; I. Gornichalaga (Arg) and S. Graf (Ger) bt K. Adams and D. Graham (US) 6-2, 4-6, 6-4; M. de Swart (SA) and S. Tatarova (Ukr) bt C. Reedoff (Ger) and G. Pezzichini (It) 7-5, 6-4; S. Schett (Austria) and P. Schryder (Switz) bt C. Oshin and E. Loh (Fr) 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.



Smith, the British No.1, attacks with a backhand during her defeat by Pratt, in which she missed many chances

BOWLS: GOURLAY PUTS PAID TO LIVELY CHALLENGER FROM HONG KONG

Kennedy's colourful run ends

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

FASHION note from the world indoor championship at Potters Leisure Resort in Norfolk: Noel Kennedy, the bandana man from Hong Kong, bought his scarlet headgear, not in Stanley Market, but in Norwich.

Kennedy, who put up a good show before giving best to the No 6 seed, David Gourlay, will add the red bandana to his collection of 15 at home in Wan Chai.

The 32-year-old, who struts his stuff at the Kowloon Bowling Green Club, where he has played for almost 20 years, said: "I think it adds a bit of colour to the game. When I was in Australia for the world outdoor championships in 1996, I also smeared my face with zinc cream in a matching colour."

An emergency committee of

the Hong Kong Bowling Association was once called to discuss whether the Wales-born Kennedy should be allowed to wear a coloured bandana in the Hong Kong Classic Pairs

tournament. "They agreed on condition that it should be regulation white," he said with a chuckle. "Now coloured shirts are commonplace, and I wear them all the time."

Kennedy believes that something needs to be done to make the game more attractive. "Otherwise, it will just fade away and die," he said. "The game is particularly staid in the UK, where I understand that ties are compulsory at club and county level."

Kennedy held set ties in the first and second sets, but Gourlay, the 1996 champion, wriggled free to win the first, 7-5, and ditched the jack to win the second, 7-4, when his opponent was holding three.

"I feel disappointed, because I could have been two sets up,"

Kennedy said. "David hit a one-bowl target to save the first set and hit the jack to save the second. That took the wind out of my sails, but I thought I was unlucky to be beaten in straight sets."

Gourlay said: "If I'd lost the first set, Noel would have perked up, and the game might have been very different."

"I realise I need to step up a gear, but it's good to win when you are playing below 100 per cent and now that I'm in the quarter-finals, I think I've got something to spare."

A 25-year-old Irishman, who has a familiar name, but is new to televised bowls, defeated an Australian who ties himself into knots before dispatching his woods. Jonathan Ross beat Ian Taylor, 7-0, 5-7, 7-0, 7-2.



Gourlay: escaped set ties

SNOOKER

Judge gives narrow verdict to Ireland

BY PHIL YATES

MICHAEL JUDGE rekindled Ireland's hopes of winning the Nations Cup by beating Joe Swail in a dramatic deciding frame to give his side a 6-5 victory over Northern Ireland at the Telewest Arena, Newcastle, yesterday.

The outcome of a 44-hour tussle was determined when Judge potted the black after Swail had twice escaped from a snooker. Even then, Judge had to endure a split second of anxiety as the white almost ran in off.

"I'm thrilled to bits but I must admit I have never felt quite that nervous before," Judge said. "The pressure was unbelievable but I just about held up."

The result meant that, after the completion of five matches, all the five competing nations retain the opportunity to reach the final on Sunday, although England, defeated in both of their outings so far, are hanging on by a shoestring.

Jason Prince protected his

100 per cent record in two singles frames and when partnering Swail in another. Dennis Taylor also helped Northern Ireland's cause by claiming the fourth frame. He and Terry Murphy required a snooker when Ken Doherty unaccountably went in off the pink. Taylor potted it from distance, then the black for a 3-1 Northern Ireland advantage only for Ireland to fight back to lead 4-3.

When Prince defeated Stephen O'Connor, who arrived back in Newcastle at five o'clock yesterday morning following a marathon match in the qualifying competition of the world championship at Blackpool and was understandably jaded, Northern Ireland again assumed the role of favourites at 5-4.

O'Brien enabled Ireland to draw level at 5-5 before Judge held his composure under pressure to keep the quartet of Dubliners in contention for the title.

BOXING

Couch prepares for latest challenge

BY SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

JANE COUCH, the only professional woman boxer in Britain, will make her second appearance in this country, when she defends her Women's International Boxing Federation (IBF) welterweight title against Maritsa Sjanw, of Holland, at the Thornaby Pavilion, Middlesbrough, on February 20.

Tex Woodward, Couch's trainer, said yesterday that the challenger will provide a far greater test than did her last opponent, Simone Lukic, an 18-year-old German, whom Couch dispatched in two rounds at Streatham last November. Sjanw, who was born in Surinam, had 70 contests as a kick-boxer before taking up traditional boxing. She has won six out of her seven contests.

Couch, whose bout will be shown live by Front Row, the cable television company, said she was not upset by the lack of support from traditionalists. "It's a new

sport and you're going to get controversy. It doesn't bother me," she said. "If they are talking about me, at least they are leaving somebody else alone."

"All the publicity of my last fight made television come to me and back me like they do the girls in America. Those promoters who have been against me are going to want me on their shows soon, because I sell tickets."

Couch, who has been sparing with men in preparation for this contest, said she wants to box every two months.

The bill is headed by a World Boxing Federation middleweight title bout between Cornelius Carr, of Middlesbrough, and Simon Brown, of Jamaica. Carr, who is trained by Pepe Correa, the former trainer of Lennox Lewis, came close to beating Steve Collins and believes he has the armoury to surprise Brown, a former IBF and World Boxing Council champion.

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CHANGING TIMES

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MOTOR RALLYING

McRae joy hinges on official verdict

FROM JEREMY HART IN MONTE CARLO

COLIN McRAE should not get too attached to the trophy and four championship points he was awarded here yesterday for an unexpected third place in the Monte Carlo Rally, the opening round of the world championship.

Both might have to be handed back in a fortnight if the Scots controversial Ford Focus — which has an oversized water pump — is found illegal by the sport's governing body, the FIA. The car was only allowed to start in Monte Carlo under appeal.

"It is more of a misander-



McRae: potential victim

standing than an illegal part, but I'd be the victim if they took the points away. I hope it won't come to that," McRae said. "But even if they do take our place and the points, it won't take anything away from the result."

McRae shocked his fellow drivers with the car's turn of speed. Four times in 14 stages, McRae and Nicky Grist, his co-driver, set the fastest time. Yesterday morning they were challenging for second place when a rear drive shaft broke.

"The Ford was very impressive," Tommi Mäkinen, the rally winner, said. "For the rally it was better if it competed. Now for Colin and the sport, I just hope they fix the problem."

It was only at a shake-down test the day before the start of the rally that Ford realised that last-minute changes to the

engine and the steering had transformed the Focus into a competitive machine.

"Monte Carlo is not always a good indicator of how fast a car is, but it is fast again in Sweden and Kenya, then the other teams had better take notice," McRae said. "But this is a new car and there is still a lot more to do."

Mäkinen's win was the three times world champion's first in the Monte Carlo rally. His job was made easier by the early departure of Carlos Sainz, whose Toyota crashed out in the first five miles.

"Carlos is going to be really angry now," Mäkinen, from Finland, said. "First he lost the RAC and the title to me, and now I win here when he crashes out. In Sweden he will want to win very badly."

Juha Kankkunen, 39, also from Finland, finished runner-up, in his first drive for Subaru. For the first time in almost five years, since Toyota were banned from rallying, he feels as if he has a chance of winning the world championship. "This car is the Rolls Royce of rally cars. A real joy to drive," he said. "I think it is good enough to really give me a chance of winning the title."

Richard Burns, of Great Britain, finished ninth, a legacy of time lost during two crashes on the treacherous first stage. The Oxford driver, in his first year with Subaru, complained of wrong tyre choices through the rest of the rally.

"Of course we have encountered some problems along the way here, so we have tried a range of different settings," Burns, winner of the Network Q Rally of Great Britain in November, said.

"We have tried to learn as much about the car as well as working with the team as I possibly could. I am positive that what I have learned will mean that Sweden is a whole lot better."

Harri Rovenpera secured a first world championship stage win for Seat on the final stage.

Hanley's career takes wing

Christopher Irvine charts the sudden emergence of an exceptional England prospect

Ideally, the modern rugby union wing should be a 6ft 4in, 16st slab of granite. In other words, a back built like a forward, but with pace — lots of pace. Steve Hanley is that perfect specimen, who clocks 11 seconds for 100 metres, bulldozes opponents or simply skips past them. Moreover, he is a young man in a hurry.

Remarkably, Hanley, 19, was still playing outside centre for Aspatia in the Jewson League second division north when the season began. By the end of September he had joined Sale, had been given his chance on the left wing, where he had only occasionally played before, and, in five appearances in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division, has scored seven tries with an assurance that is often breathtaking.

It is a strike-rate consistent with 30 tries for Aspatia last season and another 15 in nine games for the Whitehaven rugby league academy team — something to keep me fit over the summer — which alerted Wigan Warriors and at least two other JJB Super League clubs to his potential. Nevertheless, his immediate future rests in union and, for the past fortnight, he has been involved in England's technical sessions after an impressive under-21 debut against South Africa.

Such a rapid elevation could go to an impressive head, but Hanley is a down-to-earth Cumbrian, whose biggest concern this week, in a hectic schedule of Sale and England squad training, contract talks and moves to hire an agent, was keeping up with his second-year sports science studies at Central Lancashire University, Preston.

"Obviously, playing for England is a long-term goal, but cementing my first-team place at Sale is the most important thing. Everything has come at once, but if you let your head go, your feet won't follow," he said. With such an attitude, he will go far.

Just how far and how rapidly are two fascinating questions. Hanley's star quality is based on a mere handful of appearances. Spencer Brown, Paul Sampson and Tom Beem, Hanley's erstwhile Sale colleagues, were all one-cap wonders on the wing in



Hanley breaks clear of the Northampton defence to score a try earlier this season

the southern hemisphere last summer. In 12 matches in the past year, England have tried ten wings without settling on the right combination.

John Mitchell, the Sale director of rugby and England assistant coach, said: "It's no secret that England have something of a wing problem. Dave Luger has made a good impression coming into the side. Steve's made rapid progress in a short time and is World Cup material. Everything's going for him right now. The test will be to see how he responds mentally when he's at a low point."

"I'd reckon he's here to stay. He's not only strong,

quick and genuinely exciting, he has all the skills. His good passing ability comes from playing at centre, but he's got great confidence on the wing, not arrogance, to beat his man — and that's important."

Clive Woodward, the England coach, has been invited by Mitchell to Heywood Road for Sale's league match on Saturday against Newcastle Falcons, primarily to judge David Rees and Tony Underwood in opposition on the flanks, but also to see whether Hanley sustains the form that some observers reckon should see him fast-tracked into the senior national side.

'He's not only strong and quick, he has all the skills'

RUGBY UNION

RFU faces threat of second fine

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE AND KARL JOHNSTON

WITH the maul over the Five Nations Championship over, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) must turn to its ruck with the world game. It has until today to file a written response to the guilty verdict reached last week by the International Rugby Board (IRB) of "conduct prejudicial to the interests of the board", for which a heavy fine can be expected.

The ultimate sanction would be suspension from the IRB, which would mean that England would be expelled from the World Cup in October, but that has been ruled out. Nevertheless, the unedifying spectacle of Twickenham and the world governing authority fighting again must inflict further damage on the game after the humiliating climbdown by the RFU on the sharing out of Five Nations television revenue.

Any fine would be the second financial penalty imposed on the RFU. It had £50,000 of IRB Trust funds withheld last month, after it had refused to pay a penalty for the same amount, for failing to prevent leading English clubs playing unauthorised matches with Cardiff and Swansea, the Welsh clubs.

At the centre of the latest dispute is a formal complaint lodged last April by English clubs with the European Commission about the insistence by the IRB that it should control rugby union at club level as well as the international game.

The clubs insist that the IRB is operating restrictive practices, which prevent them from negotiating their own commercial agreements for competitions in which they participate. However, what has particularly angered the IRB was that the RFU had offered "absolute and unqualified support" in its stance against English First-Division Rugby and ended up "renegeing" on its pledge.

An IRB spokesman said: "We're still awaiting a response to the guilty verdict. If none is forthcoming, the disciplinary committee will probably decide next week any appropriate action."

The National Clubs' Association (NCA), which represents 42 Jewson League clubs, weighed into the row over a British league yesterday by

opposing changes to the existing structure for a fourth consecutive season, which would damage the interests of smaller clubs.

The RFU has until the end of the month to announce a playing structure for next season. Colin Sewell, the NCA secretary, said: "This is as important as any RFU conflict with other nations. We are vehemently opposed to any proposed changes at any level, which affect the playing goals during the season."

"The RFU signed the Mayfair Agreement last year. It states that any changes in the league structure would require 12 months' notice, would be minimal and could commence only when three years had elapsed after signing. Our view is that, as the Mayfair Agreement was legally ratified, it cannot be altered."

As Roger Pickering, the tournament director of European

Andrew Aitken, the South Africa back row forward, has retired because of his business commitments. Aitken, an Oxford Blue in 1993, won the last of his six caps as a replacement in South Africa's tri-nations victory over Australia last August. He also represented Scotland in the World Cup sevens tournament of 1994 and played a season of rugby league in Perth.

Rugby Cup Ltd (ERC) began his state-of-play press conference in Dublin yesterday, only 600 tickets remained unsold for the final next week between Ulster and Colomiers at Lansdowne Road. It was safe to assume that they had gone by the end of the media briefing, so, for the first time outside of international matches, Lansdowne Road will be full to its 49,000 capacity, which will be the biggest attendance yet at the final of the European competition in its four-year history.

"The match is a sell-out," Philip Browne, the secretary of the Irish Rugby Football Union, said. "We have 28,000 tickets in Ulster at the moment, 8,000 more than the original allocation. The rest of the tickets are divided out between the other provinces and Colomiers."

Derbyshire chairman likely to go

BY RICHARD HOBSON

VIC BROWNNETT, the chairman, is expected to become a casualty of the continuing struggle for power at Derbyshire. He is understood to be considering his position and may step down today when the committee will discuss Dominic Cork's request to leave, although he has three years of his contract to run.

The resignation of Brownnett, who says the inter-club squabbles of the past four months have put pressure on his family and business, would leave Derbyshire in a state of flux five days ahead of the annual meeting, at which members are expected to call for a special meeting to remove the committee en bloc.

Brownnett has been unable to broker a settlement between Cork, the captain, and Harold Rhodes, a committee member whom the England all-rounder wanted to see prevented from influencing cricket issues. "This has damaged my credibility, my relationship with the committee and, most important, the reputation of the club," Brownnett said.

With Kim Barnett having been allowed to leave, Cork determined to end a ten-year association and influential members, including Chris Middleton, a former chairman, pushing for the removal of Rhodes, it is possible that all of the leading protagonists in the dispute could be gone by the start of the season.

Gladstone Small, the Warwickshire seam bowler, is to retire at the end of the 1999 season, his twentieth in county cricket.

"I have decided to give it one last go. I still feel I have something to offer on the field," he said yesterday. Small, 37, who played in 17 Tests for England, is expected to take up a full-time post in the Warwickshire marketing department.

CRICKET: YORKSHIREMAN'S SUCCESS PROVES HIGHLIGHT OF AUSTRALIA TOUR

Dazzler can book place among stars of England's fast show

Michael Henderson salutes the rapid rise of Darren Gough, one of the world's finest pace bowlers

him came John Snow and, before him, Brian Statham and Fred Trueman, who, younger readers may like to know, really was as good as he says. Frank Tyson was, for two years, murderously fast. That's five in half a century, not a dainty dish to set before the king.

Gough has now reached the point in his career when he can join that company. His skill, rhythm and mood have conjoined in a happy alliance that may enable him, in the next year or two, to become that rarest of beings, a great bowler. At the moment, he is in the very good category, a step behind Allan Donald and Glenn McGrath.

In terms of pace, his captain puts him behind Donald, who can sustain it for long spells and who is undoubtedly one of

the really great fast bowlers of the past 50 years. How he finished on the losing side in England last summer is still a bit of a mystery, but he has certainly made up for it since, bowling West Indies to their doom in South Africa.

Gough seems to know that he is entering the best period of his life. Having missed the tour last winter to West Indies because of injury, he has completed consecutive series, against South Africa and Australia, and will return to England with his reputation enhanced substantially. In Australia, where charlatans and scoundrels are called for what they are, players and public alike acknowledge the Yorkshireman to be a worthy foe.

"I wanted to be as consistent as other fast bowlers were for

their countries," Gough said after he took four Sri Lankan wickets in Melbourne on Tuesday. "I would say that on this tour I have been consistent. I see myself as England's opening bowler and I'm proud to be that."

Red-cheeked, lithe, bronzed and full of purpose, Gough cuts a fine figure these days. His action, in its economy and fluidity, is lovely and, when he lets the ball go, he usually asks questions of the batsman. His most obvious highlight was the first day of the Sydney Test, when he took a hat-trick, but there have been other times when he has bowled as well for little reward.

"It was just about the perfect bowling display," Stewart said of the most recent match, when Gough sent back four batsmen, including the dangerous Jayasuriya, before taking a blow. In Sydney, he was no worse, dismissing two more wickets, Gilchrist and Ponting, and nearly getting a third. Hussain, at gully, missed Mark Waugh early in his innings.

Gough's response to that drop was typical. Later in the over, when Hussain made a fine stop in that position, to deny Waugh runs, he blew him an imaginary kiss, as if to say: "No matter, Nass, we can still win this game." One of Gough's finest qualities, perhaps his finest, is his knowledge that, win or lose, it is only a game, one to be enjoyed.

England's chances of winning the World Cup, when it is staged on their own turf later this year, depend to a large extent on whether Gough carries his present form beyond Easter. Of course, there are people who think that England winning the World Cup is a foolish dream, but it is not. They need half a dozen players to show their hand and Gough, it becomes clearer by the day, is the key man. He's a star.



Gough's performances have lifted him among the ranks of the best England fast bowlers of the past 50 years



Armed security forces have been put on a round-the-clock watch in Madras

Protests gain momentum

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SECURITY forces in India are preparing for the worst as the Pakistan cricket tour of the country approaches. Armed personnel yesterday guarded the ground at Madras, where the first Test begins a week from today, as a militant Indian leader vowed that his regional right-wing Hindu party would sabotage the tour.

Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena party has already dug up the pitch at one of the Test venues and was believed to be behind the ransacking on Monday of the headquarters of the Indian Cricket Board.

"We won't disclose our plans, but the truth is that Pakistan will not be allowed to play," Thackeray said in a television interview.

The intensity of the situation escalated yesterday when an auto-rickshaw driver set himself ablaze in Madras. The man, not named but said to be a member of a Hindu militant group by an Indian press agency, was taken to hospital with serious burns. Also

in Madras, police arrested 100 activists of Shiv Sena.

The Pakistan squad is due to fly into New Delhi this afternoon for the first Test series between the two countries for 12 years.

Thackeray's party, based in Bombay, says it will mobilise 25,000 supporters during the

part of India's loose coalition government.

Thackeray has a long history of making inflammatory threats against Pakistan. In the World Cup in 1996, he said that Pakistani players who dared to enter the country would have their legs broken by iron bars. Pakistan, however, played in India without incident.

Abul Behari Vajpayee, the Indian prime minister, has denounced Thackeray's comments and called for the tour to go ahead. The Shiv Sena says it opposes the tour because of the support of Islamists for Muslim separatists in Kashmir, a region claimed by both India and Pakistan and the root cause of continuing tension between the countries.

In another security measure, the India team will return from their tour of New Zealand unannounced. They had been expected to touch down in Bombay, but an undisclosed new itinerary has been drawn up.

Novel approach to the doorstep challenge

When the narrator mentioned early on in last night's *Mersey Blues* (BBC2) that Liverpool gangsters carry firearms so routinely that "over a two-year period, the Merseyside police investigated more than 300 cases connected with the illegal use of guns", it made you wonder just how many legal uses of pump-action shotguns and hand pistols in Liverpool's city centre the police had endorsed.

It reminded me of Erma Bombeck's reaction to reading a psychologist's advice to "never strike a child in anger": this left Bombeck struggling to work out when he could strike her. When he is kissing me on my birthday?

It is now also routine for any incident in Liverpool's clubland to be attended by at least one armed police unit, including Hockley & Koch sub-machineguns. So, as far as you can tell from this series, if

you've spent a day in Liverpool without seeing someone pull a gun, you've probably been at home asleep all day. Even then, there's no knowing when someone in a uniform won't come through your door like a hurricane. Bombeck in Liverpool never rings the bell if they can smash down a door with their battering rams.

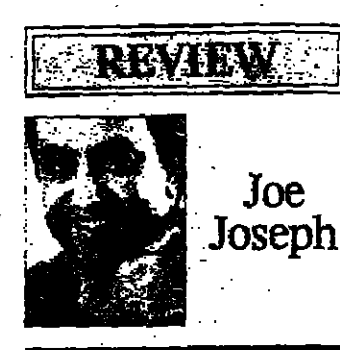
This week we weren't chasing drugs so much as the guns that gangsters use to arbitrate their drug-related turf wars. It was a special police operation, code-named "Vixen" (who knows?).

Detective Inspector Gary Watson's problem is that Operation Vixen is supposed to be running for three months. But with six weeks still to go, he's already £800 over budget. All those costly surveillance operations are going to have to be cancelled; and all those violent mobsters will be free to roam without fear of police interference. But

Mersey Blues is such compulsive viewing that it would be a shame to struggle with this gripping television for the sake of a few pounds. The nearest solution - which would keep the Merseyside police in funds and prolong our entertainment - would be my own newly copyrighted "Surveillance TV".

Surveillance TV will be a channel devoted to live police stations, enabling us to feel that we are watching - actually as it happens - the centuries-old tradition of criminals wriggling free from justice.

Running? There are several possibilities. The first would be telephone pledges, as with Comic Relief or the BBC's Children in Need. Telephone: as official funds dwindled Terry Wogan or Stephen Fry would appear in the upper right-hand corner of our TV screens to remind us of the telephone hotline number where



Joe Joseph

stars from *The Sweeney* and *The Bill* were waiting to take down our credit card details and process our pledges to pay the overtime bill needed to keep that night's live surveillance team at their posts.

A second method would be the one pioneered by *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* under which members of the public would telephone a premium line number for the chance to sit in the police

car along with members of Watson's team: a percentage of the 60p-a-minute takings would be used to fund the stakeout.

Supplementing these two schemes, there is the sponsorship opportunity of attaching company names to the special police operations. So instead of Operation Vixen, we had last week, or this week, Operation Panadol, or Operation Persil Automatic.

Employing novel tactics against the enemy certainly paid off for Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, a couple of podgy, bearded hippies who set up Ben and Jerry's ice-cream in their home town of Burlington, Vermont, after sending off \$5 for a correspondence course in ice-cream making.

It turned out to be a great summer. Then, as we saw in *Ice-Cream Wars*, Simon Dickson's sickly entertaining film on *Blood on the Carpet* (BBC2), the winter snows

came and people stopped buying so much ice-cream.

So Ben and Jerry - who only looked as though they had slept in their clothes on account of the fact that they often had - tried to sell to supermarkets via wholesale distributors. This upset Häagen-Dazs - part of the Pillsbury food empire, including Burger King and Green Giant - which told its distributors to choose us or them. In a cute visual joke, Dickson showed a convoy of Häagen-Dazs lorries hitting the road, with the sort of background music you hear in Coppola movies when members of the established Mafia family are heading off in their black limos to deal with some cheap new hoods.

So Ben and Jerry did what nobody had ever dared to do before: they demolished the Pillsbury Doughboy. They portrayed the Doughboy as the

criminal mastermind behind a conspiracy to drive their business into the ground. There were T-shirts, hoodies, posters on buses, all asking the same question: "What's the Doughboy afraid of?" They even hired a lawyer, whom they chose because he met the key legal criterion of wearing shoes that were falling apart. Pillsbury felt crippled by the publicity. Worse, Pillsbury had turned a teeny company, that nobody outside Vermont had even heard of, into a big noise in the ice-cream world.

The biggest noise in *Fish Tales*, Neil Grant's gor-bimney-guy-fings-aint-wor-they-used-to-be film for Inside Story (BBC1), came from the mouth of Billingsgate fish trader Roger Barton. It was a mouth big enough to accommodate Jonah. Roger insisted that fish was "better than perfume, the finest smell in the world". But maybe just that little bit trickier to dab behind the ears, eh Roger?

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (25266)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (74315)
8.00am (Kitty) (7405841)
9.45am The Vanessa Show (7587711)
10.55am News: Regional News: Weather (7744805)
11.00am Real Roads (7754082)
11.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (7724841)
11.55am News: Regional News: Weather (7744805)

12.00pm Call My Bluff (32334)
12.30pm Between Dogs' Home (67518)
1.00pm One O'Clock News: Weather (74402)
1.30pm Regional News: Weather (6438841)
1.40pm Neighbours: Alex offers Sarah a sympathetic ear (7512587)
2.05pm Inside A Murder Occurs at the theatre while inside and two people with strong motives are present (7401131)
2.55pm Going for a Song (3303888)
3.20pm The Weather Show Stories and reports (7744805)

3.25pm Children's BBC: Playdays (8825069)
3.45pm The All New Poppy Show (9825377)
3.50pm Pocket Dragon Adventures (8245569)
4.05pm Rurals (7668860)
4.20pm Home Farm Twins (7673633)
4.35pm Short Change (1450773)
5.00pm Newsround (5207402)
5.10pm See How They Run (75977)

5.33pm Rewind (75624)
5.35pm Neighbours: Alex offers Sarah a sympathetic ear (7512587)
5.50pm One O'Clock News: Weather (74402)
6.30pm Regional News Magazine (773)
7.00pm Watchdog with Anne Robinson: Consumer investigation show, putting some of the biggest names on the high street under the spotlight (7470)
7.30pm EastEnders: Rocco makes a life-changing decision (75977)

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BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC: Breakfast Show: Open a Door (4895119)
7.05am Teletubbies (2770978)
7.30am Secret Squirrel and Co (3858808)
7.55am Blue Peter (2085150)
8.20am Tax-Mania (9303228)
8.40am Polka Dot Shorts (5873711)
8.55am Fiddly Fiddle Bird (5871858)
9.00am Job Bank (7808268)
9.10am Ballerina Film (6217131)
9.30am Watch (8080083)
9.45am Come Outside (8085518)
10.00am Teletubbies (34353)
10.30am Storytime (5644402)
10.45am The Experimenter (3858537)
11.05am Space Ark (9422247)
11.15am Zog (1204421)
11.35am Lateschool (5431131)
12.00pm Job Bank (9112082)
12.10am English Film (4703773)
12.30am Working Lunch (58860)
1.00am Fiddly Fiddle Bird (7341688)

1.10am The Antiques Show (78205150)
1.40am The Arts and Crafts Show (65139150)
2.10am Indoor Bowls: World Championship Round two draws to a close (2252624)
2.40am News: Weather (7744805)
2.45am Westminster (7417878)
3.25am News: Weather (7724150)
3.30am Indoor Bowls: World Championship Round two draws to a close (75402)
3.50am Tennis: Australian Open The key action from the fourth day (7781)
6.00am Star Trek: The Next Generation The Enterprise is lured into a trap by a fake distress signal (7733944)
6.45am The Outer Limits A dead woman hears... for the first time (7759577)
7.30am Regional Programmes (7599)
8.00am The Travel Show: Juliet Morris visits Cambodia's Eden Valley (77880)
8.30am Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines: American F15 and drag racing on snowmobiles (3/5) (7719955)
11.15am Late Review Margaret Cook's explosive new book (599763)
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OLYMPICS 50

Emperor Samaranich surveys the mess at Salt Lake City

SPORT

THURSDAY JANUARY 21 1999

GOLF 47

In-form Els aims to capture fourth South African Open title



Striker sparks rift with Villa Collymore's outburst clouds future

By Russell Kempson

STAN COLLYMORE was at it again yesterday, talking out of turn, speaking his mind and not caring who heard. The Aston Villa forward, one of football's most enigmatic and controversial figures, could contain himself no longer over what he perceived as the unfairness of his partial exclusion from Villa's FA Carling Premiership title challenge.

Collymore's rant came as no surprise. He is predictable only in his unpredictability and few of his previous managers — at Crystal Palace, Southend United, Nottingham Forest or Liverpool — have been able to unravel the complexities that lie within him.

It is his timing, though, that is perhaps unfortunate. With Dion Dublin injured, Collymore was more than likely to be recalled for the FA Cup fourth-round tie against

Fulham at Villa Park on Saturday. When John Gregory, the Villa manager, absorbs the latest outburst, though, he may prefer Paul Merson as a partner for Julian Joachim.

Collymore's ire emanates from the fact that he has started only one of Villa's past seven Premiership matches. He is fit, having recovered from an early-season Achilles tendon problem, and available. Yet Gregory has declined to pick him.

"Being overlooked week in, week out, it is becoming more and more obvious that I'm a peripheral figure," Collymore said. "I've never been that in my career and I've never let the club down when I've played. If anything, I've come on and changed games for them."

"I feel I'm playing well enough to warrant a place, but this situation cannot go on for

ever. At 27, I want to play regular first-team football. Where I go from here I just don't know, but if it continues, I'll have to look at it closely."

Gregory might be happy to rid himself of a player whose influence in the dressing-room is said to range from unsettling to disruptive and would have no fears about releasing him. It was Brian Little, Gregory's predecessor, who signed Collymore for £7 million from Liverpool in May 1997 and, consequently, felt obliged to select him, even when he was playing poorly or offering his views too freely. Gregory does not carry such baggage and would readily sell him for as little as £4 million, presuming he could find a British buyer.

A more likely resolution could arrive in the summer and involve a swap deal with Juninho, the Atlético Madrid and former Middlesbrough midfielder. Juninho is in a similar position to Collymore, with Arrigo Sacchi, the Atlético coach, using him only sparingly.

Villa were linked with Juninho last week. Gianni Paladini, who advises the Brazilian, said that his client admired Villa's style and the progress they had made since Gregory took

Wilkinson compromise... 49
Knight back in harness... 49

over 11 months ago. Villa are believed to have made preliminary contact with Atlético to establish Juninho's availability. Intriguingly, Collymore's name was understood to have been on the list of replacements when Atlético sold Christian Vieri to Lazio for £18 million last summer.

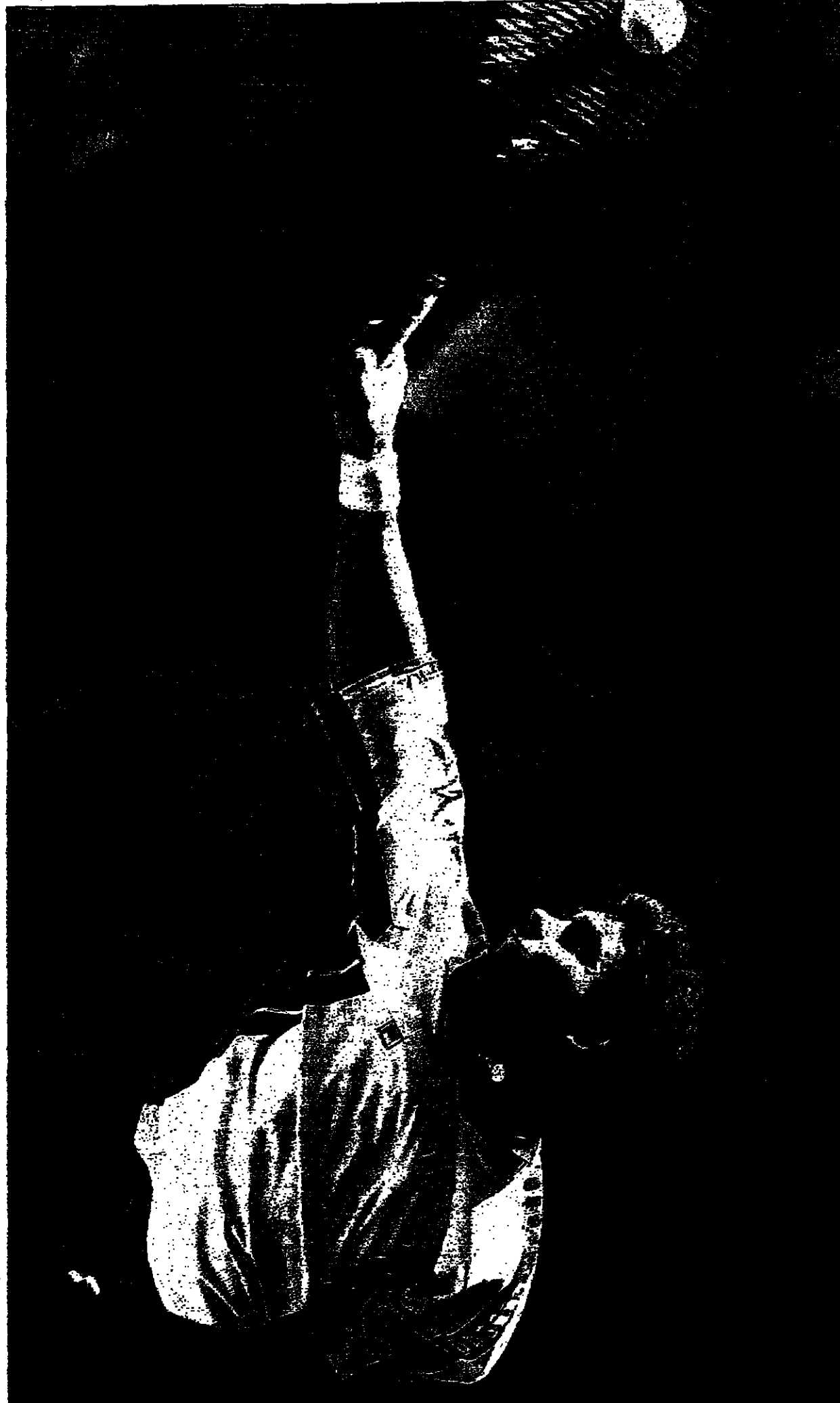
Nothing can be done until the end of the season, the "transfer window" in the Spanish league having closed on January 15. Collymore, who is 28 tomorrow, must therefore sit and stew and hope that Gregory invites him for tea and sympathy.

"The most disappointing thing is that I'm in my peak years," Collymore said. "I'm at the club I've always wanted to be with but, as the weeks go by, I'm becoming an incidental figure. It is something that I do not find acceptable."

He is also concerned about his prospects of returning to the international scene. Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, watched Villa's 3-0 victory against Everton on Monday, but Collymore played in only the second half. "I have taken a step backwards in the England reckoning," Collymore said. "It doesn't matter how well I played against Everton. Glenn will read that Collymore was on the bench."

"I was pretty confident I could get 20 goals or more this season but the less you are playing, the less goals you are going to score. I'm not the type of player to go knocking on doors but I'm disappointed. It's down to the manager and, at the end of the day, he's doing a good job for the club."

Faint praise, indeed. Gregory will invite Collymore into his office today and ask for an explanation from football's most tortured of souls. A friendly hand may be extended but, come the summer, Collymore could start counting his pay in pesetas.



Philippoussis, the big-hitting Australian, shows his service power during a five-set victory over the resolute Chang

Australia looking to Rafter for home success

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT
TENNIS CORRESPONDENT
IN MELBOURNE

PATRICK Rafter, the highest surviving seed in the Australian Open, maintained his quarter-final collision course with Tim Henman when he coasted into the third round by beating Mark Woodforde yesterday. Henman had earlier stood his ground by dispatching Sander Stolle in five hard-fought sets.

Before a rumbustious centre-court audience, Rafter, seeded No 3, dispatched Woodforde 6-2, 6-4, 6-4 to raise Australia's hopes that he can take the title. Not for 23 years has a homespun talent won the season's opening grand-slam tournament.

He has two formidable hurdles to clear before he can entertain thoughts of a showdown with Henman. He must account for the in-form Thomas Enqvist of Sweden, before a projected fourth-round tussle with his compatriot, Mark Philippoussis, a match which, according to local ticket touts, would generate record prices on the black market.

Henman's prospects of landing his first grand-slam title increased when Alex Corretja, seeded No 2, was humbled in four sets by Christian Rud, a journeyman from Norway.

In the women's event, Venus Williams, seeded No 5, dismantled Asa Carlsson of Sweden, for the loss of three games. However, Lindsay Davenport, seeded No 1, served notice of her own ambitions with an equally emphatic victory over Florencia Labat, of Argentina. Sam Smith, the sole British representative in the women's draw, succumbed 6-4, 6-4 to Nicole Pratt of Australia, after squandering several chances.

The drugs controversy surrounding Petr Korda, the defending men's champion, died down yesterday, but not before Brian Tobin, president of the International Tennis Federation, invited ridicule from the wider sporting community when he said: "I don't see that it has damaged the sport at all."

The two-session aggregate yesterday of more than 50,467 was the second record audience in three days.

Henman's win, page 46

STAN COLLYMORE

TRANSFERS

4.1.91 Stafford Rangers to Crystal Palace, £100,000
20.11.92 Crystal Palace to Southend United, £100,000
5.7.93 Southend United to Nottingham Forest, £2 million
3.7.95 Nottingham Forest to Liverpool, £8.5 million
12.7.97 Liverpool to Aston Villa, £7 million

GOALS/SCORING RECORD

Crystal Palace: 25 games, 2 goals; Southend United: 39 games, 18 goals
Nottingham Forest: 78 games, 45 goals; Liverpool: 81 games, 36 goals
Aston Villa: 54 games, 15 goals; Overall: 271 games, 115 goals

THE WORD ACCORDING TO STAN

On his style:
"What would you rather see? Someone running around building a character for themselves based on fighting and being rough and kicking people, or a lazy git who's got the ball and score an amazing goal?"
"The fees that I have gone for suggest that people want something different. If I can't find a platform to do that I'll keep plugging away until I do, whether that be in Division Four or Division Ten of the local park league."

On his problems at Liverpool:
"At Liverpool I sometimes felt I had to pretend to be somebody else. I went out with the lads there. I felt I had to be like a Spice Boy or something to conform to that image."

On his capabilities:
"I hope it doesn't sound arrogant but I've never watched a forward do anything I don't think I'm capable of myself."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1620

ACROSS

1 Country house; holiday home (5)
4 Strange; inquisitive (7)
8 (One's) utmost effort (5,4)
9 Free path to next round (3)
10 Holder for liquids; type of train (4)
11 Not touching alcohol (5)
13 Rather choose (4)
14 Thomas —, built Hampton Court (6)
17 Retaliatory act (9)
19 Plant, occurs wet stones etc (4)
22 Having as maiden name (3)
23 Helping (towards) (9)
24 Feelings of admiration (7)

DOWN

2 Drunk; firmly fastened (5)
1 Manservant (5)
2 Inspiring affection (7)
3 Rod holding wheels (4)
4 Ingenious (6)
5 (In) turn (5)
6 Planet's path (5)
7 Mary —, *Frankenstein* author (7)
12 So-so (8)
13 Close colleague (7)
15 Sleeping noisily (7)
16 Attractive horseshoe (6)
18 Push against newspapers (5)
20 Aroma (5)
21 Rudely brief (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1619

ACROSS: 1 Disc jockey 8 Muezzin 9 Pique 10 Bake
11 Headline 13 Choir 14 Tools 16 Bassanio 17 Hawk
20 Sloth 21 Terrier 22 Prima donna
DOWN: 1 Demob 2 Speak too soon 3 Jazz 4 Conifer
5 Expedite 6 Equivocation 7 Aeneas 12 Preacher
13 Cubism 15 Victim 18 Karma 19 Grid

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McHarg on the attack

Christopher Irvine bemoans the sorry state of rugby union

A last year, McHarg, capped 42 times by Scotland, who played 14 years for London Scottish and later coached the side, yesterday summed up the proposed takeover of the club by Bristol and every other festering, sabre-rattling dispute in the wacky world of rugby union. "To me," he said, "it's a matter of supreme indifference."

What has caused a leading figure of Scotland and London Scottish rugby to turn his back on the sport is the same grievance the wider public shares for a game that has sullied itself at nearly every level. Who honestly cares for the spectacle of sporting anarchy?

Yesterday was typical of the inane, insane world of rugby union. Bristol's promised buy-out failed to emerge. Ken Scoble, the London Scottish president, doubted whether it ever would.

Today brings more madness when the Rugby Football Union switches battle grounds from Five Nations

Championship television revenues to political warring with the International Rugby Board, Yawn.

Across the rugby spectrum, interminable conflicts are keeping lawyers busy but boring spectators, sponsors and television executives senseless. For those who perceive a British League as a panacea to unite all the warring factions and transform the sport into a wealthy and glamorous feast to rival football, have been too busy squabbling to notice that rugby union's boat left dock at least two years ago. Then, the newly-professionalised game could have packaged and sold itself properly. It all looks too late now.

The World Cup is only eight

months away, yet is anyone talking about it? While England and the Five Nations Committee indulged in their game of bluff and brinkmanship this week, did anyone stop to think about the enormous damage to a game many perceive as rotting away?

McHarg is not averse to the implosion theory. "Starting from scratch might be no bad thing because what we have now is something so utterly removed from what rugby was about that it's barely worth bothering with. If Scotland were playing a mile down the road, I'd not bother going," he said.

"And yet I watched an Armed Services game at Aldershot the other day which was totally uplifting. The standard was appalling, but these guys played to the best of their ability, got stuck in and slapped each other on the back afterwards."

Camaraderie, brotherhood, togetherness, call it what you like, that's what's rugby's lost at the top level."

Ponting stumped after bar brawl

By Michael Henderson
IN MELBOURNE

He needs to. His international career is at stake. The ACB has powers to fine or suspend Ponting, who ended up with a blackened eye in the brawl. Malcolm Speed, the ACB chief executive, said the incident was under investigation.

Ponting said he had no recollection of the episode, which occurred after England had beaten Australia in a one-day international match in the early hours of Monday. The 24-year-old Tasmanian bats-

man, who made his Test debut four years ago, was fined by the Australia team management after a fracas in a Calcutta nightclub last year.

On this occasion he was punished for breaking the 130am curfew imposed by the management after day-night games.

Ponting said that "everything was fine" at the club, and that he did not know who hit him. He would seek counselling, and promised to become "squeaky clean".

Gough's fast show, page 48



Ponting: counselling

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